

THE STAMPEDE

THE LOG OF A COWBOY

A Narrative of the Old Trail Days

BY

ANDY ADAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY E. BOYD SMITH

"Our cattle also shall go with us."
— *Exodus* iv. 26.



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

COPYRIGHT, 1903, BY ANDY ADAMS
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published May, 1903.

TO VINU
AMBOUUAO

955

A 211

(



TO THE
COWMEN AND BOYS OF
THE OLD WESTERN TRAIL

THESE PAGES ARE
GRATEFULLY
DEDICATED



226573



CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. UP THE TRAIL	1
II. RECEIVING	11
III. THE START	28
IV. THE ATASCOSA	40
V. A DRY DRIVE	56
VI. A REMINISCENT NIGHT	70
VII. THE COLORADO	84
VIII. ON THE BRAZOS AND WICHITA	102
IX. DOAN'S CROSSING	120
X. NO MAN'S LAND	135
XI. A BOGGY FORD	158
XII. THE NORTH FORK	177
XIII. DODGE	187
XIV. SLAUGHTER'S BRIDGE	210
XV. THE BEAVER	232
XVI. THE REPUBLICAN	240
XVII. OGALALLA	258
XVIII. THE NORTH PLATTE	275
XIX. FORTY ISLANDS FORD	288
XX. A MOONLIGHT DRIVE	307
XXI. THE YELLOWSTONE	326
XXII. OUR LAST CAMP-FIRE	347
XXIII. DELIVERY	361
XXIV. BACK TO TEXAS	379



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
THE STAMPEDE (page 42) . . . <i>Frontispiece</i>	
MAP SHOWING THE TRAIL	28
HEAT AND THIRST	60
MEETING WITH INDIANS	138
CELEBRATING IN DODGE	206
STORY-TELLING	236
SWIMMING THE PLATTE	292



THE LOG OF A COWBOY

CHAPTER I

UP THE TRAIL

JUST why my father moved, at the close of the civil war, from Georgia to Texas, is to this good hour a mystery to me. While we did not exactly belong to the poor whites, we classed with them in poverty, being renters; but I am inclined to think my parents were intellectually superior to that common type of the South. Both were foreign born, my mother being Scotch and my father a north of Ireland man, — as I remember him, now, impulsive, hasty in action, and slow to confess a fault. It was his impulsiveness that led him to volunteer and serve four years in the Confederate army, — trying years to my mother, with a brood of seven children to feed, garb, and house. The war brought me my initiation as a cowboy, of which I have now, after the long lapse of years, the greater portion of which were spent with cattle, a distinct recollection. Sherman's army, in its march to the sea, passed through our county, devastating that section for miles in its passing.

Foraging parties scoured the country on either side of its path. My mother had warning in time and set her house in order. Our work stock consisted of two yoke of oxen, while our cattle numbered three cows, and for saving them from the foragers credit must be given to my mother's generalship. There was a wild canebrake, in which the cattle fed, several hundred acres in extent, about a mile from our little farm, and it was necessary to bell them in order to locate them when wanted. But the cows were in the habit of coming up to be milked, and a soldier can hear a bell as well as any one. I was a lad of eight at the time, and while my two older brothers worked our few fields, I was sent into the canebrake to herd the cattle. We had removed the bells from the oxen and cows, but one ox was belled after darkness each evening, to be unbelled again at daybreak. I always carried the bell with me, stuffed with grass, in order to have it at hand when wanted.

During the first few days of the raid, a number of mounted foraging parties passed our house, but its poverty was all too apparent, and nothing was molested. Several of these parties were driving herds of cattle and work stock of every description, while by day and by night gins and plantation houses were being given to the flames. Our one-roomed log cabin was spared, due to the ingenious tale told by my mother as to the whereabouts of my father ; and yet she taught her children to fear God

and tell the truth. My vigil was trying to one of my years, for the days seemed like weeks, but the importance of hiding our cattle was thoroughly impressed upon my mind. Food was secretly brought to me, and under cover of darkness, my mother and eldest brother would come and milk the cows, when we would all return home together. Then, before daybreak, we would be in the cane listening for the first tinkle, to find the cattle and remove the bell. And my day's work commenced anew.

Only once did I come near betraying my trust. About the middle of the third day I grew very hungry, and as the cattle were lying down, I crept to the edge of the canebrake to see if my dinner was not forthcoming. Soldiers were in sight, which explained everything. Concealed in the rank cane I stood and watched them. Suddenly a squad of five or six turned a point of the brake and rode within fifty feet of me. I stood like a stone statue, my concealment being perfect. After they had passed, I took a step forward, the better to watch them as they rode away, when the grass dropped out of the bell and it clattered. A red-whiskered soldier heard the tinkle, and wheeling his horse, rode back. I grasped the clapper and lay flat on the ground, my heart beating like a trip-hammer. He rode within twenty feet of me, peering into the thicket of cane, and not seeing anything unusual, turned and galloped away after his companions. Then the lesson, taught me by my mother, of being "faithful over a

few things," flashed through my mind, and thought our cattle were spared to us, I felt very guilty.

Another vivid recollection of those boyhood days in Georgia was the return of my father from the army. The news of Lee's surrender had reached us, and all of us watched for his coming. Though he was long delayed, when at last he did come riding home on a swallow-marked brown mule, he was a conquering hero to us children. We had never owned a horse, and he assured us that the animal was his own, and by turns set us on the tired mule's back. He explained to mother and us children how, though he was an infantryman, he came into possession of the animal. Now, however, with my mature years and knowledge of brands, I regret to state that the mule had not been condemned and was in the "U. S." brand. A story which Priest "The Rebel," once told me throws some light on the matter; he asserted that all good soldiers would steal. "Can you take the city of St. Louis?" was asked of General Price. "I don't know as I can take it," replied the general to his consulting superiors, "but if you will give me Louisiana troops I'll agree to steal it."

Though my father had lost nothing by the war he was impatient to go to a new country. Many of his former comrades were going to Texas, and, as our worldly possessions were movable, to Texas we started. Our four oxen were yoked to the wagon in which our few household effects were loaded and

in which mother and the smaller children rode, and with the cows, dogs, and elder boys bringing up the rear, our caravan started, my father riding the mule and driving the oxen. It was an entire summer's trip, full of incident, privation, and hardship. The stock fared well, but several times we were compelled to halt and secure work in order to supply our limited larder. Through certain sections, however, fish and game were abundant. I remember the enthusiasm we all felt when we reached the Sabine River, and for the first time viewed the promised land. It was at a ferry, and the sluggish river was deep. When my father informed the ferryman that he had no money with which to pay the ferriage, the latter turned on him remarking, sarcastically: "What, no money? My dear sir, it certainly can't make much difference to a man which side of the river he's on, when he has no money."

Nothing daunted by this rebuff, my father argued the point at some length, when the ferryman relented so far as to inform him that ten miles higher up, the river was fordable. We arrived at the ford the next day. My father rode across and back, testing the stage of the water and the river's bottom before driving the wagon in. Then taking one of the older boys behind him on the mule in order to lighten the wagon, he drove the oxen into the river. Near the middle the water was deep enough to reach the wagon box, but with shoutings and a free applic?

tion of the gad, we hurried through in safety. One of the wheel oxen, a black steer which we call "Pop-eye," could be ridden, and I straddled him in fording, laving my sunburned feet in the cold water. The cows were driven over next, the dogs swimming, and at last, bag and baggage, we were in Texas.

We reached the Colorado River early in the fall where we stopped and picked cotton for several months, making quite a bit of money, and near Christmas reached our final destination on the San Antonio River, where we took up land and built a house. That was a happy home; the country was new and supplied our simple wants; we had milk and honey, and, though the fig tree was absent, along the river grew endless quantities of mustard grapes.

At that time the San Antonio valley was principally a cattle country, and as the boys of our family grew old enough the fascination of a horse and saddle was too strong to be resisted. My two older brothers went first, but my father and mother made strenuous efforts to keep me at home, and did so until I was sixteen. I suppose it is natural for every country boy to be fascinated with some other occupation than the one to which he is bred. In my early teens, I always thought I should like either to drive six horses to a stage or clerk in a store, and if I could have attained either of those lofty heights, at that age, I would have asked

more. So my father, rather than see me follow in the footsteps of my older brothers, secured me a situation in a village store some twenty miles distant. The storekeeper was a fellow countryman of my father — from the same county in Ireland, in fact — and I was duly elated on getting away from home to the life of the village.

But my elation was short-lived. I was to receive no wages for the first six months. My father counseled the merchant to work me hard, and, if possible, cure me of the "foolish notion," as he termed it. The storekeeper cured me. The first week I was with him he kept me in a back warehouse shelling corn. The second week started out no better. I was given a shovel and put on the street to work out the poll-tax, not only of the merchant but of two other clerks in the store. Here was two weeks' work in sight, but the third morning I took breakfast at home. My mercantile career had ended, and forthwith I took to the range as a preacher's son takes to vice. By the time I was twenty there was no better cow-hand in the entire country. I could, besides, speak Spanish and play the fiddle, and thought nothing of riding thirty miles to a dance. The vagabond temperament of the range I easily assimilated.

Christmas in the South is always a season of festivity, and the magnet of mother and home yearly drew us to the family hearthstone. There we brothers met and exchanged stories of our expe-

riences. But one year both my brothers brought home a new experience. They had been up the trail, and the wondrous stories they told about the northern country set my blood on fire. Until then I thought I had had adventures, but mine paled into insignificance beside theirs. The following summer my eldest brother, Robert, himself was to boss the herd up the trail, and I pleaded with him to give me a berth, but he refused me, saying: "Not Tommy; the trail is one place where a foreman can have no favorites. Hardship and privation must be met, and the men must throw themselves equally into the collar. I don't doubt but you're a good hand; still the fact that you're my brother might cause other boys to think I would favor you. A trail outfit has to work as a unit, and dissension would be ruinous." I had seen favoritism shown on ranches, and understood his position to be right. Still I felt that I must make that trip if it were possible. Finally Robert, seeing that I was over-anxious to go, came to me and said: "I've been thinking that if I recommended you to Jim Flood, my old foreman, he might take you with him next year. He is to have a herd that will take five months from start to delivery, and that will be the chance of your life. I'll see him next week and make a strong talk for you."

True to his word, he bespoke me a job with Flood the next time he met him, and a week later a letter from Flood reached me, terse and pointed, engaging

my services as a trail hand for the coming summer. The outfit would pass near our home on its way to receive the cattle which were to make up the trail herd. Time and place were appointed where I was to meet them in the middle of March, and I felt as if I were made. I remember my mother and sisters twitted me about the swagger that came into my walk, after the receipt of Flood's letter, and even asserted that I sat my horse as straight as a poker. Possibly! but was n't I going up the trail with Jim Flood, the boss foreman of Don Lovell, the cowman and drover?

Our little ranch was near Cibollo Ford on the river, and as the outfit passed down the country, they crossed at that ford and picked me up. Flood was not with them, which was a disappointment to me, "Quince" Forrest acting as *segundo* at the time. They had four mules to the "chuck" wagon under Barney McCann as cook, while the *remuda*, under Billy Honeyman as horse wrangler, numbered a hundred and forty-two, ten horses to the man, with two extra for the foreman. Then, for the first time, I learned that we were going down to the mouth of the Rio Grande to receive the herd from across the river in Old Mexico; and that they were contracted for delivery on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation in the northwest corner of Montana. Lovell had several contracts with the Indian Department of the government that year, and had been granted the privilege of bringing in, free

of duty, any cattle to be used in filling Indian co-
tracts.

My worst trouble was getting away from home
on the morning of starting. Mother and my sis-
ters, of course, shed a few tears ; but my father
stern and unbending in his manner, gave me
his benediction in these words : " Thomas Moor-
you're the third son to leave our roof, but your
father's blessing goes with you. I left my own
home beyond the sea before I was your age." And
as they all stood at the gate, I climbed into my
saddle and rode away, with a lump in my throat
which left me speechless to reply.

CHAPTER II

RECEIVING

IT was a nice ten days' trip from the San Antonio to the Rio Grande River. We made twenty-five to thirty miles a day, giving the saddle horses all the advantage of grazing on the way. Rather than hobble, Forrest night-herded them, using five guards, two men to the watch of two hours each. "As I have little hope of ever rising to the dignity of foreman," said our *segundo*, while arranging the guards, "I'll take this occasion to show you varmints what an iron will I possess. With the amount of help I have, I don't propose to even catch a night horse; and I'll give the cook orders to bring me a cup of coffee and a cigarette before I arise in the morning. I've been up the trail before and realize that this authority is short-lived, so I propose to make the most of it while it lasts. Now you all know your places, and see you don't incur your foreman's displeasure."

The outfit reached Brownsville on March 25th, where we picked up Flood and Lovell, and dropping down the river about six miles below Fort Brown, went into camp at a cattle ford known as Paso Ganado. The Rio Grande was two hundred

yards wide at this point, and at its then stage was almost swimming from bank to bank. It had very little current, and when winds were favorable the tide from the Gulf ran in above the ford. Flood had spent the past two weeks across the river, receiving and road-branding the herd, so when the cattle should reach the river on the Mexican side we were in honor bound to accept everything bearing the "circle dot" ☉ on the left hip. The contract called for a thousand she cattle, three and four years of age, and two thousand four and five year old beeves, estimated as sufficient to fill a million-pound beef contract. For fear of losses on the trail, our foreman had accepted fifty extra head of each class, and our herd at starting would number thirty-one hundred head. They were coming up from ranches in the interior, and we expected to cross them the first favorable day after their arrival. A number of different rancheros had turned in cattle in making up the herd, and Flood reported them in good, strong condition.

Lovell and Flood were a good team of cowmen. The former, as a youth, had carried a musket in the ranks of the Union army, and at the end of that struggle, cast his fortune with Texas. When others had seen nothing but the desolation of war, Lovell saw opportunities of business, and had year by year forged ahead as a drover and beef contractor. He was well calculated to manage the cattle business but was irritable and inclined to borrow trouble

therefore unqualified personally to oversee the actual management of a cow herd. In repose, Don Lovell was slow, almost dull, but in an emergency was astonishingly quick-witted and alert. He never insisted on temperance among his men, and though usually of a placid temperament, when out of tobacco — Lord !

Jim Flood, on the other hand, was in a hundred respects the antithesis of his employer. Born to the soil of Texas, he knew nothing but cattle, but he knew them thoroughly. Yet in their calling, the pair were a harmonious unit. He never crossed a bridge till he reached it, was indulgent with his men, and would overlook any fault, so long as they rendered faithful service. Priest told me this incident : Flood had hired a man at Red River the year before, when a self-appointed guardian present called Flood to one side and said, —

“Don’t you know that that man you’ve just hired is the worst drunkard in this country?”

“No, I did n’t know it,” replied Flood, “but I’m glad to hear he is. I don’t want to ruin an innocent man, and a trail outfit is not supposed to have any morals. Just so the herd don’t count out shy on the day of delivery, I don’t mind how many drinks the outfit takes.”

The next morning after going into camp, the first thing was the allotment of our mounts for the trip. Flood had the first pick, and cut twelve bays and browns. His preference for solid colors, though

they were not the largest in the *remuda*, showing his practical sense of horses. When it came to the boys' turn to cut, we were only allowed to cut once at a time by turns, even casting lots for first choice. We had ridden the horses enough to have a fair idea as to their merits, and every lad was his own judge. There were, as it happened, only three pin horses in the entire saddle stock, and these three were the last left of the entire bunch. Now a little boy or girl, and many an older person, thinks that a spotted horse is the real thing, but practical cow-tle men know that this freak of color in range-bred horses is the result of in-and-in breeding, with consequent physical and mental deterioration. It was my good fortune that morning to get a good mount of horses, — three sorrels, two grays, two coyotes, one black, a brown, and a *grulla*. The black was my second pick, and though the color is not a happy one, his "bread-basket" indicated that he could carry food for a long ride, and ought to be a good swimmer. My judgment of him was confirmed throughout the trip, as I used him for my night horse and when we had swimming rivers to ford. I gave this black the name of "Nigger Boy."

For the trip each man was expected to furnish his own accoutrements. In saddles, we had the ordinary Texas make, the housings of which covered our mounts from withers to hips, and weighed from thirty to forty pounds, bedecked with the latest in the way of trimmings and trappings.

Our bridles were in keeping with the saddles, the reins as long as plough lines, while the bit was frequently ornamental and costly. The indispensable slicker, a greatcoat of oiled canvas, was ever at hand, securely tied to our cante strings. Spurs were a matter of taste. If a rider carried a quirt, he usually dispensed with spurs, though, when used, those with large, dull rowels were the make commonly chosen. In the matter of leggings, not over half our outfit had any, as a trail herd always kept in the open, and except for night herding they were too warm in summer. Our craft never used a cattle whip, but if emergency required, the loose end of a rope served instead, and was more humane.

Either Flood or Lovell went into town every afternoon with some of the boys, expecting to hear from the cattle. On one trip they took along the wagon, laying in a month's supplies. The rest of us amused ourselves in various ways. One afternoon when the tide was in, we tried our swimming horses in the river, stripping to our underclothing, and, with nothing but a bridle on our horses, plunged into tidewater. My Nigger Boy swam from bank to bank like a duck. On the return I slid off behind, and taking his tail, let him tow me to our own side, where he arrived snorting like a tugboat.

One evening, on their return from Brownsville, Flood brought word that the herd would camp that night within fifteen miles of the river. At day-

clothes

break Lovell and the foreman, with "Fox" Quaternight and myself, started to meet the herd. The nearest ferry was at Brownsville, and it was eleven o'clock when we reached the cattle. Flood had dispensed with an interpreter and had taken Quaternight and me along to do the interpreting. The cattle were well shed and in good flesh for such an early season of the year, and in receiving, our foreman had been careful and had accepted only such as had strength for a long voyage. They were the long-legged, long-horned Southern cattle, pale colored as a rule, possessed the running powers of a deer, and in an ordinary walk could travel with a horse. They had about thirty vaqueros under corporal driving the herd, and the cattle were strung out in regular trailing manner. We rode with them until the noon hour, when, with the understanding that they were to bring the herd to Fort Ganado by ten o'clock the following day, we rode for Matamoros. Lovell had other herds to start on the trail that year, and was very anxious to catch the cattle the following day, so as to get the western steamer—the only mode of travel—which would leave Point Isabel for Galveston on the first of April.

The next morning was bright and clear, with a light east wind, which insured a flood tide in the river. On first sighting the herd that morning, we were ready to cross them as soon as they reached the river. The wagon was moved up within a hundred yards of the ford, and a substantial corral of rough

was stretched. Then the entire saddle stock was driven in, so as to be at hand in case a hasty change of mounts was required. By this time Honeyman knew the horses of each man's mount, so all we had to do was to sing out our horse, and Billy would have a rope on one and have him at hand before you could unsaddle a tired one. On account of our linguistic accomplishments, Quarternight and I were to be sent across the river to put the cattle in and otherwise assume control. On the Mexican side there was a single string of high brush fence on the lower side of the ford, commencing well out in the water and running back about two hundred yards, thus giving us a half chute in forcing the cattle to take swimming water. This ford had been in use for years in crossing cattle, but I believe this was the first herd ever crossed that was intended for the trail, or for beyond the bounds of Texas.

When the herd was within a mile of the river, Fox and I shed our saddles, boots, and surplus clothing and started to meet it. The water was chilly, but we struck it with a shout, and with the cheers of our outfit behind us, swam like smugglers. A swimming horse needs freedom, and we scarcely touched the reins, but with one hand buried in a mane hold, and giving gentle slaps on the neck with the other, we guided our horses for the other shore. I was proving out my black, Fox had gray of equal barrel displacement, — both good swimmers; and on reaching the Mexican shore,

we dismounted and allowed them to roll in warm sand.

Flood had given us general instructions, and halted the herd about half a mile from the river. The Mexican corporal was only too glad to let us assume charge, and assured us that he and his outfit were ours to command. I at once claimed Fox Quarternight, whose years and experience outranked mine, the *gringo* corporal for the day, at which the vaqueros smiled, but I noticed they never used the word. On Fox's suggestion the Mexican corporal brought up his wagon and corralled his horses as we had done, when his cook to our delight, invited all to have coffee before starting. That cook won our everlasting regards, for the coffee was delicious. We praised it highly, whereupon the corporal ordered the cook to have a hand for the men in the intervals between crossing the different bunches of cattle. A March day on the Rio Grande with wet clothing is not summer, and the vaqueros hesitated a bit before following the example of Quarternight and myself and departing with saddles and boots. Five men were then detailed to hold the herd as compact as possible, and the remainder, twenty-seven all told, cut across about three hundred head and started for the river. I took the lead, for though cattle are less gregarious by nature than other animals, under pressure of excitement they will follow a leader. It was about noon and the herd were thirsty, so when

reached the brush chute, all hands started them on a run for the water. When the cattle were once inside the wing we went rapidly, four vaqueros riding outside the fence to keep the cattle from turning the chute on reaching swimming water. The leaders were crowding me close when Nigger breasted the water, and closely followed by several lead cattle, I struck straight for the American shore. The vaqueros forced every hoof into the river, following and shouting as far as the midstream, when they were swimming so nicely, Quarternight called off the men and all turned their horses back to the Mexican side. On landing opposite the exit from the ford, our men held the cattle as they came out, in order to bait the next bunch.

I rested my horse only a few minutes before taking the water again, but Lovell urged me to take an extra horse across, so as to have a change in case my black became fagged in swimming. Quarternight was a harsh *segundo*, for no sooner had I reached the other bank than he cut off the second bunch of about four hundred and started them. Turning Nigger Boy loose behind the brush fence, as to be out of the way, I galloped out on my second horse, and meeting the cattle, turned and again took the lead for the river. My substitute did not swim with the freedom and ease of the black, and several times cattle swam so near me that I could lay my hand on their backs. When out halfway over, I heard shoutings behind me.

in English, and on looking back saw Nigger I swimming after us. A number of vaqueros tempted to catch him, but he outswam them and came out with the cattle; the excitement was much for him to miss.

Each trip was a repetition of the former, with varying incident. Every hoof was over in less than two hours. On the last trip, in which there were about seven hundred head, the horse of one of the Mexican vaqueros took cramps, it was supposed at about the middle of the river, and sank without a moment's warning. A number of us heard the man's terrified cry, only in time to see horse and rider sink. Every man within reach turned to the rescue, and a moment later the man rose to the surface. Fox caught him by the shirt, and, shaking the water out of him, turned him over to one of the other vaqueros, who towed him back to their own side. Strange as it may appear, the horse never came to the surface again, which supported the supposition of cramps.

After a change of clothes for Quarternight and myself, and rather late dinner for all hands, there yet remained the counting of the herd. The Mexican corporal and two of his men had come over for the purpose, and though Lovell and several wealthy rancheros, the sellers of the cattle, were present, remained for Flood and the corporal to make the final count, as between buyer and seller. There was also present a river guard, — sent out by the

United States Custom House, as a matter of form in the entry papers, — who also insisted on counting. In order to have a second count on the herd, Lovell ordered The Rebel to count opposite the government's man. We strung the cattle out, now logy with water, and after making quite a circle, brought the herd around where there was quite a bluff bank of the river. The herd handled well, and for a quarter of an hour we lined them between our four mounted counters. The only difference in the manner of counting between Flood and the Mexican corporal was that the American used a tally string tied to the pommel of his saddle, on which were ten knots, keeping count by slipping a knot on each even hundred, while the Mexican used ten small pebbles, shifting a pebble from one hand to the other on hundreds. "Just a mere difference in nationality," Lovell had me interpret to the selling dons.

When the count ended only two of the men agreed on numbers, The Rebel and the corporal making the same thirty-one hundred and five, — Flood being one under and the Custom House man one over. Lovell at once accepted the count of Priest and the corporal; and the delivery, which, as I learned during the interpreting that followed, was to be sealed with a supper that night in Brownsville, was consummated. Lovell was compelled to leave us, to make the final payment for the herd, and we would not see him again for some

time. They were all seated in the vehicle ready to start for town, when the cowman said to his foreman, —

“Now, Jim, I can’t give you any pointers on handling a herd, but you have until the 10th day of September to reach the Blackfoot Agency. An average of fifteen miles a day will put you there on time, so don’t hurry. I’ll try and see you at Dodge and Ogalalla on the way. Now, live well for I like your outfit of men. Your credit letter is good anywhere you need supplies, and if you want more horses on the trail, buy them and draft on me through your letter of credit. If any of your men meet with accident or get sick, look out for them the same as you would for yourself, and I’ll honor all bills. And don’t be stingy over your expense account, for if that herd don’t make money, you and I had better quit cows.”

I had been detained to do any interpreting needful, and at parting Lovell beckoned to me. When I rode alongside the carriage, he gave me his hand and said, —

“Flood tells me to-day that you’re a brother of Bob Quirk. Bob is to be foreman of my herd that I’m putting up in Nueces County. I’m glad you’re here with Jim, though, for it’s a longer trip. Yes, you’ll get all the circus there is, and stay for the concert besides. They say God is good to the poor and the Irish; and if that’s so, you’ll pull through all right. Good-by, son.” And as he gave me

hearty, ringing grip of the hand, I could n't help feeling friendly toward him, Yankee that he was. ✓

After Lovell and the dons had gone, Flood ordered McCann to move his wagon back from the river about a mile. It was now too late in the day to start the herd, and we wanted to graze them well, as it was our first night with them. About half our outfit grazed them around on a large circle, preparatory to bringing them up to the bed ground as it grew dusk. In the untrammelled freedom of the native range, a cow or steer will pick old dry grass on which to lie down, and if it is summer, will prefer an elevation sufficient to catch any passing breeze. Flood was familiar with the habits of cattle, and selected a nice elevation on which the old dry grass of the previous summer's growth lay matted like a carpet.

Our saddle horses by this time were fairly well broken to camp life, and, with the cattle on hand, night herding them had to be abandoned. Billy Honeyman, however, had noticed several horses that were inclined to stray on day herd, and these few leaders were so well marked in his memory that, as a matter of precaution, he insisted on putting a rope hobble on them. At every noon and night camp we strung a rope from the hind wheel of our wagon, and another from the end of the wagon tongue back to stakes driven in the ground or held by a man, forming a triangular corral. Thus in a few minutes, under any conditions, we could construct a tempo-

rary corral for catching a change of mounts, or for the wrangler to hobble untrustworthy horses. On the trail all horses are free at night, except the regular night ones, which are used constantly during the entire trip, and under ordinary conditions keep strong and improve in flesh.

Before the herd was brought in for the night and during the supper hour, Flood announced the guards for the trip. As the men usually bunked in pairs, the foreman chose them as they slept, but was under the necessity of splitting two berths and bedfellows. "Rod" Wheat, Joe Stallings, and Asa Borrowstone were assigned to the first guard, from eight to ten thirty P. M. Bob Blades, "Bull" Durham, and Fox Quarternight were given second guard, from ten thirty to one. Paul Priest, John Officer, and myself made up the third watch, from one to three thirty. The Rebel and I were bunkies and this choice of guards, while not ideal, was much better than splitting bedfellows and having them annoy each other by going out and returning from guard separately. The only fault I ever found with Priest was that he could use the poorest judgment in selecting a bed ground for our blankets, and always talked and told stories to me until I fell asleep. He was a light sleeper himself, while being much younger, was the reverse. The fourth and last guard, from three thirty until relieved after daybreak, fell to Wyatt Roundtree, Quinn Forrest, and "Moss" Strayhorn. Thus the on-

men in the outfit not on night duty were Honey man, our horse wrangler, Barney McCann, our cook, and Flood, the foreman. The latter, however, made up by riding almost double as much as any man in his outfit. He never left the herd until it was bedded down for the night, and we could always hear him quietly arousing the cook and horse wrangler an hour before daybreak. He always kept a horse on picket for the night, and often took the herd as it left the bed ground at clear dawn.

A half hour before dark, Flood and all the herd men turned out to bed down the cattle for our first night. They had been well grazed after counting, and as they came up to the bed ground there was not a hungry or thirsty animal in the lot. All seemed anxious to lie down, and by circling around slowly, while gradually closing in, in the course of half an hour all were bedded nicely on possibly five or six acres. I remember there were a number of muleys among the cattle, and these would not venture into the compact herd until the others had lain down. Being hornless, instinct taught them to be on the defensive, and it was noticeable that they were the first to arise in the morning, in advance of their horned kin. When all had lain down, Flood and the first guard remained, the others returning to the wagon.

The guards ride in a circle about four rods outside the sleeping cattle, and by riding in opposite

directions make it impossible for any animal to make its escape without being noticed by the rider. The guards usually sing or whistle continuously, so that the sleeping herd may know that a friend and not an enemy is keeping vigil over their dream. A sleeping herd of cattle make a pretty picture on a clear moonlight night, chewing their cud and grunting and blowing over contented stomachs. The night horses soon learn their duty, and a rider may fall asleep or doze along in the saddle, but the horses will maintain their distance in their leisurely sentinel rounds.

On returning to the wagon, Priest and I picketed our horses, saddled, where we could easily find them in the darkness, and unrolled our bed. We had two pairs of blankets each, which, with an ordinary wagon sheet doubled for a tarpaulin, and coats and boots for pillows, completed our couch. We slept otherwise in our clothing worn during the day, and if smooth, sandy ground was available on which to spread our bed, we had no trouble in sleeping through sleep that long hours in the saddle were certain to bring. With all his pardonable faults, The Rebel was a good bunkie and a hail companion, this being his sixth trip over the trail. He had been with Lovell over a year before the two made the discovery that they had been on opposite sides during the "late unpleasantness." On making this discovery, Lovell at once rechristened Priest "The Rebel," and that name he always bore. He was

fifteen years my senior at this time, a wonderfully complex nature, hardened by unusual experiences into a character the gamut of whose moods ran from that of a good-natured fellow to a man of unrelenting severity in anger.

We were sleeping a nine knot gale when Fox Quarternight of the second guard called us on our watch. It was a clear, starry night, and our guard soon passed, the cattle sleeping like tired soldiers. When the last relief came on guard and we had returned to our blankets, I remember Priest telling me this little incident as I fell asleep.

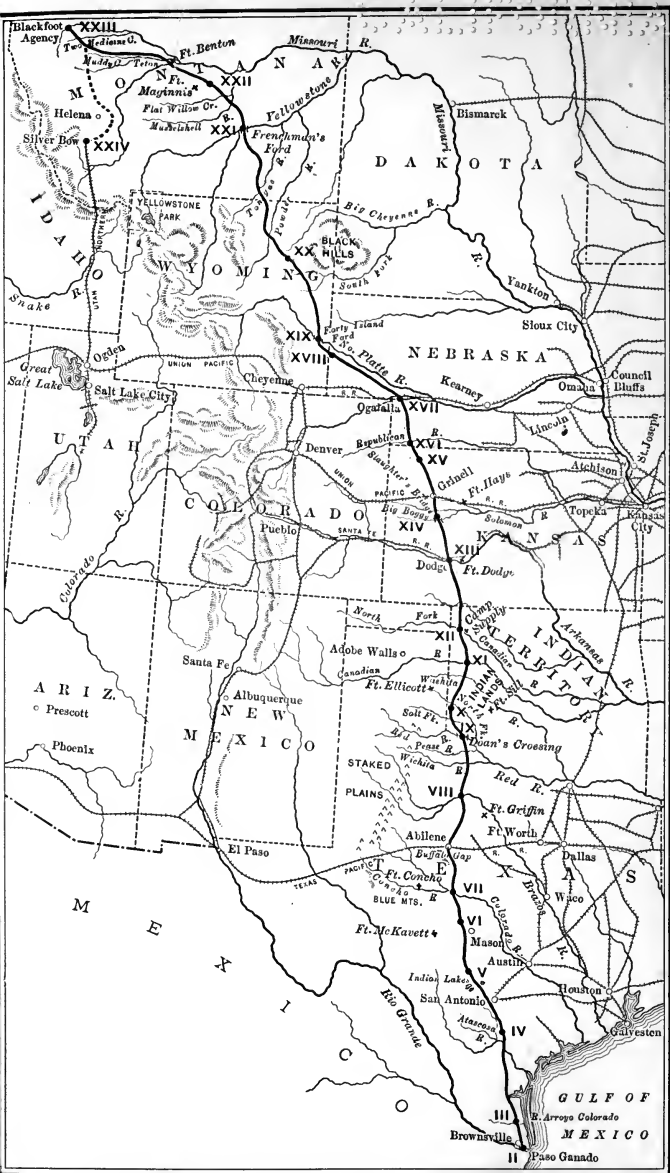
"I was at a dance once in Live Oak County, and there was a stuttering fellow there by the name of Lem Todhunter. The girls, it seems, did n't care to dance with him, and pretended they could n't understand him. He had asked every girl at the party, and received the same answer from each — they could n't understand him. 'W-w-w-ell, g-g-g-go to hell, then. C-c-c-can y-y-you understand that?' he said to the last girl, and her brother threatened to mangle him horribly if he did n't apologize, to which he finally agreed. He went back into the house and said to the girl, 'Y-y-you n-n-n-need n't g-g-g-go to hell; y-y-your b-b-b-brother and I have m-m-made other 'r-r-r-range-ments.'"

CHAPTER III

THE START

ON the morning of April 1, 1882, our Circle Dot herd started on its long tramp to the Blackfoot Agency in Montana. With six men on each side, and the herd strung out for three quarters of a mile, it could only be compared to some mythical serpent or Chinese dragon, as it moved forward on its sinuous, snail-like course. Two riders, known as point men, rode out and well back from the lead cattle, and by riding forward and closing in as occasion required, directed the course of the herd. The main body of the herd trailed along behind the leaders like an army in loose marching order, guarded by outriders, known as swing men, who rode well out from the advancing column, warding off range cattle and seeing that none of the herd wandered away or dropped out. There was no driving to do; the cattle moved of their own free will as in ordinary travel. Flood seldom gave orders; but, as a number of us had never worked on the trail before, at breakfast on the morning of our start he gave in substance these general directions:—

“Boys, the secret of trailing cattle is never to let



MAP (1882) SHOWING THE TRAIL.

your herd know that they are under restraint. Let everything that is done be done voluntarily by the cattle. From the moment you let them off the bed ground in the morning until they are bedded at night, never let a cow take a step, except in the direction of its destination. In this manner you can loaf away the day, and cover from fifteen to twenty miles, and the herd in the mean time will enjoy all the freedom of an open range. Of course, it's long, tiresome hours to the men; but the condition of the herd and saddle stock demands sacrifices on our part, if any have to be made. And I want to caution you younger boys about your horses; there is such a thing as having ten horses in your string, and at the same time being afoot. You are all well mounted, and on the condition of the *remuda* depends the success and safety of the herd. Accidents will happen to horses, but don't let it be your fault; keep your saddle blankets dry and clean, for no better word can be spoken of a man than that he is careful of his horses. Ordinarily a man might get along with six or eight horses, but in such emergencies as we are liable to meet, we have not a horse to spare, and a man afoot is useless."

And as all of us younger boys learned afterward, there was plenty of good, solid, horse-sense in Flood's advice; for before the trip ended there were men in our outfit who were as good as afoot, while others had their original mounts, every one fit for the saddle. Flood had insisted on a good

mount of horses, and Lovell was cowman enough to know that what the mule is to the army the cowhorse is to the herd.

The first and second day out there was no incident worth mentioning. We traveled slowly, hardly making an average day's drive. The third morning Flood left us, to look out a crossing on the Arroyo Colorado. On coming down to receive the herd, we had crossed this sluggish bayou about thirty-six miles north of Brownsville. It was a deceptive-looking stream, being over fifty feet deep and between bluff banks. We ferried our wagon and saddle horses over, swimming the loose ones. But the herd was keeping near the coast line for the sake of open country, and it was a question if there was a ford for the wagon as near the coast as our course was carrying us. The murmurings of the Gulf had often reached our ears the day before, and herds had been known, in former years, to cross from the mainland over to Padre Island, the intervening Laguna Madre being fordable.

We were nooning when Flood returned with the news that it would be impossible to cross our wagon at any point on the bayou, and that we would have to ford around the mouth of the stream. Where the fresh and salt water met in the laguna, there had formed a delta, or shallow bar; and by following its contour we would not have over twelve to fourteen inches of water, though the half circle was nearly two miles in length. As we would barely

have time to cross that day, the herd was at once started, veering for the mouth of the Arroyo Colorado. On reaching it, about the middle of the afternoon, the foreman led the way, having crossed in the morning and learned the ford. The wagon followed, the saddle horses came next, while the herd brought up the rear. It proved good footing on the sandbar, but the water in the laguna was too salty for the cattle, though the loose horses lay down and wallowed in it. We were about an hour in crossing, and on reaching the mainland met a vaquero, who directed us to a large fresh-water lake a few miles inland, where we camped for the night.

It proved an ideal camp, with wood, water, and grass in abundance, and very little range stock to annoy us. We had watered the herd just before noon, and before throwing them upon the bed ground for the night, watered them a second time. We had a splendid camp-fire that night, of dry live oak logs, and after supper was over and the first guard had taken the herd, smoking and story telling were the order of the evening. The camp-fire is to all outdoor life what the evening fireside is to domestic life. After the labors of the day are over, the men gather around the fire, and the social hour of the day is spent in yarning. The stories told may run from the sublime to the ridiculous, from a true incident to a base fabrication, or from a touching bit of pathos to the most vulgar vulgarity.

"Have I ever told this outfit my experience with the vigilantes when I was a kid?" inquired Bull Durham. There was a general negative response, and he proceeded. "Well, our folks were living on the Frio at the time, and there was a man in our neighborhood who had an outfit of four men out beyond Nueces Cañon hunting wild cattle for their hides. It was necessary to take them out supplies about every so often, and on one trip he begged my folks to let me go along for company. I was a slim slip of a colt about fourteen at the time, and as this man was a friend of ours, my folks consented to let me go along. We each had a good saddle horse, and two pack mules with provisions and ammunition for the hunting camp. The first night we made camp, a boy overtook us with the news that the brother of my companion had been accidentally killed by a horse, and of course he would have to return. Well, we were twenty miles on our way, and as it would take some little time to go back and return with the loaded mules, I volunteered, like a fool kid, to go on and take the packs through.

"The only question was, could I pack and unpack. I had helped him at this work, double-handed, but now that I was to try it alone, he showed me what he called a squaw hitch, with which you can lash a pack single-handed. After putting me through it once or twice, and satisfying himself that I could do the packing, he consented

to let me go on, he and the messenger returning home during the night. The next morning I packed without any trouble and started on my way. It would take me two days yet, poking along with heavy packs, to reach the hunters. Well, I had n't made over eight or ten miles the first morning, when, as I rounded a turn in the trail, a man stepped out from behind a rock, threw a gun in my face, and ordered me to hold up my hands. Then another appeared from the opposite side with his gun leveled on me. Inside of half a minute a dozen men galloped up from every quarter, all armed to the teeth. The man on leaving had given me his gun for company, one of these old smoke-pole, cap-and-ball six-shooters, but I must have forgotten what guns were for, for I elevated my little hands nicely. The leader of the party questioned me as to who I was, and what I was doing there, and what I had in those packs. That once, at least, I told the truth. Every mother's son of them was cursing and cross-questioning me in the same breath. They ordered me off my horse, took my gun, and proceeded to verify my tale by unpacking the mules. So much ammunition aroused their suspicions, but my story was as good as it was true, and they never shook me from the truth of it. I soon learned that robbery was not their motive, and the leader explained the situation.

"A vigilance committee had been in force in that county for some time, trying to rid the country of

lawless characters. But lawlessness got into the saddle, and had bench warrants issued and served on every member of this vigilance committee. As the vigilantes numbered several hundred, there was no jail large enough to hold such a number, so they were released on parole for appearance at court. When court met, every man served with a *capias*—"

"Hold on! hold your horses just a minute," interrupted Quince Forrest, "I want to get that word. I want to make a memorandum of it, for I may want to use it myself sometime. *Capias*? Now I have it; go ahead."

"When court met, every man served with a bench warrant from the judge presiding was present, and as soon as court was called to order, a squad of men arose in the court room, and the next moment the judge fell riddled with lead. Then the factions scattered to fight it out, and I was passing through the county while matters were active.

"They confiscated my gun and all the ammunition in the packs, but helped me to repack and started me on my way. A happy thought struck one of the men to give me a letter, which would carry me through without further trouble, but the leader stopped him, saying, 'Let the boy alone. Your letter would hang him as sure as hell's hot, before he went ten miles farther.' I declined the letter. Even then I did n't have sense enough to turn back, and inside of two hours I was rounded up by the other faction. I had learned my story

perfectly by this time, but those packs had to come off again for everything to be examined. There was nothing in them now but flour and salt and such things — nothing that they might consider suspicious. One fellow in this second party took a fancy to my horse, and offered to help hang me on general principles, but kinder counsels prevailed. They also helped me to repack, and I started on once more. Before I reached my destination the following evening, I was held up seven different times. I got so used to it that I was happily disappointed every shelter I passed, if some man did not step out and throw a gun in my face.

“ I had trouble to convince the cattle hunters of my experiences, but the absence of any ammunition, which they needed worst, at last led them to give credit to my tale. I was expected home within a week, as I was to go down on the Nueces on a cow hunt which was making up, and I only rested one day at the hunters' camp. On their advice, I took a different route on my way home, leaving the mules behind me. I never saw a man the next day returning, and was feeling quite gala on my good fortune. When evening came on, I sighted a little ranch house some distance off the trail, and concluded to ride to it and stay overnight. As I approached, I saw that some one lived there, as there were chickens and dogs about, but not a person in sight. I dismounted and knocked on the door, when, without a word, the door was thrown wide

open and a half dozen guns were poked into my face. I was ordered into the house and given a chance to tell my story again. Whether my story was true or not, they took no chances on me, but kept me all night. One of the men took my horse to the stable and cared for him, and I was well fed and given a place to sleep, but not a man offered a word of explanation, from which I took it they did not belong to the vigilance faction. When it came time to go to bed, one man said to me, 'Now, sonny, don't make any attempt to get away, and don't move out of your bed without warning us, for you'll be shot as sure as you do. We won't harm a hair on your head if you're telling us the truth; only do as you're told, for we'll watch you.'

"By this time I had learned to obey orders while in that county, and got a fair night's sleep, though there were men going and coming all night. The next morning I was given my breakfast; my horse, well cuffed and saddled, was brought to the door, and with this parting advice I was given permission to go: 'Son, if you've told us the truth, don't look back when you ride away. You'll be watched for the first ten miles after leaving here, and if you've lied to us it will go hard with you. Now, remember, don't look back, for these are times when no one cares to be identified.' I never questioned that man's advice; it was 'die dog or eat the hatchet' with me. I mounted my horse, waved the usual parting courtesies, and rode away. As I turned

into the trail about a quarter mile from the house, I noticed two men ride out from behind the stable and follow me. I remembered the story about Lot's wife looking back, though it was lead and not miracles that I was afraid of that morning.

"For the first hour I could hear the men talking and the hoofbeats of their horses, as they rode along always the same distance behind me. After about two hours of this one-sided joke, as I rode over a little hill, I looked out of the corner of my eye back at my escort, still about a quarter of a mile behind me. One of them noticed me and raised his gun, but I instantly changed my view, and the moment the hill hid me, put spurs to my horse, so that when they reached the brow of the hill, I was half a mile in the lead, burning the earth like a canned dog. They threw lead close around me, but my horse lengthened the distance between us for the next five miles, when they dropped entirely out of sight. By noon I came into the old stage road, and by the middle of the afternoon reached home after over sixty miles in the saddle without a halt."

Just at the conclusion of Bull's story, Flood rode in from the herd, and after picketing his horse, joined the circle. In reply to an inquiry from one of the boys as to how the cattle were resting, he replied, —

"This herd is breaking into trail life nicely. If we'll just be careful with them now for the first

month, and no bad storms strike us in the night we may never have a run the entire trip. That last drink of water they had this evening gave them a night-cap that 'll last them until morning. No there's no danger of any trouble to-night."

For fully an hour after the return of our foreman, we lounged around the fire, during which there was a full and free discussion of stampedes. But finally, Flood, suiting the action to the words by arising, suggested that all hands hunt their blankets and turn in for the night. A quiet wink from Bull to several of the boys held us for the time being, and innocently turning to Forrest, Durham inquired, —

"Where was — when was — was it you that was telling some one about a run you were in last summer? I never heard you tell it. Where was it?"

"You mean on the Cimarron last year when we mixed two herds," said Quince, who had taken the bait like a bass and was now fully embarked on yarn. "We were in rather close quarters, herded ahead and behind us, when one night here came a cow herd like a cyclone and swept right through our camp. We tumbled out of our blankets and ran for our horses, but before we could bridle" —

Bull had given us the wink, and every man in the outfit fell back, and the snoring that checked the storyteller was like a chorus of rip saws running through pine knots. Forrest took in the

situation at a glance, and as he arose to leave, looked back and remarked, —

“You must all think that’s smart.”

Before he was out of hearing, Durham said to the rest of us, —

“A few doses like that will cure him of sucking eggs and acting smart, interrupting folks.”

CHAPTER IV

THE ATASCOSA

FOR the next few days we paralleled the coast, except when forced inland by various arms of the Laguna Madre. When about a week out from the Arroyo Colorado, we encountered the Salt Lagoon, which threw us at least fifty miles in from the coast. Here we had our last view of salt water, and the murmurings of the Gulf were heard no more. Our route now led northward through what were then the two largest ranches in Texas, the "Running W" and Laurel Leaf, which sent more cattle up the trail, bred in their own brand, than any other four ranches in the Lone Star State. We were nearly a week passing through their ranges, and on reaching Santa Gertruda ranch learned that three trail herds, of over three thousand head each, had already started in these two brands, while four more were to follow.

✓ So far we had been having splendid luck in securing water for the herd, once a day at least and often twice and three times. Our herd was becoming well trail-broken by this time, and for range cattle had quieted down and were docile and easy to handle. Flood's years of experience on the trail

made him a believer in the theory that stampedes were generally due to negligence in not having the herd full of grass and water on reaching the bed ground at night. Barring accidents, which will happen, his view is the correct one, if care has been used for the first few weeks in properly breaking the herd to the trail. But though hunger and thirst are probably responsible for more stampedes than all other causes combined, it is the unexpected which cannot be guarded against. A stampede is the natural result of fear, and at night or in an uncertain light, this timidity might be imparted to an entire herd by a flash of lightning or a peal of thunder, while the stumbling of a night horse, or the scent of some wild animal, would in a moment's time, from frightening a few head, so infect a herd as to throw them into the wildest panic. Amongst the thousands of herds like ours which were driven over the trail during its brief existence, none ever made the trip without encountering more or less trouble from runs. Frequently a herd became so spoiled in this manner that it grew into a mania with them, so that they would stampede on the slightest provocation, — or no provocation at all.

A few days after leaving Santa Gertruda Ranch, we crossed the Nueces River, which we followed up for several days, keeping in touch with it for water for the herd. But the Nueces, after passing Oakville, makes an abrupt turn, doubling back to the southwest; and the Atascosa, one of its tributaries,

became our source of water supply. We were beginning to feel a degree of overconfidence in the good behavior of our herd, when one night during the third week out, an incident occurred in which they displayed their running qualities to our complete satisfaction.

It occurred during our guard, and about two o'clock in the morning. The night was an unusually dark one and the atmosphere was very humid. After we had been on guard possibly an hour, John Officer and I riding in one direction on opposite sides of the herd, and The Rebel circling in the opposite, Officer's horse suddenly struck a gopher burrow with his front feet, and in a moment horse and rider were sprawling on the ground. The accident happened but a few rods from the sleeping herd, which instantly came to their feet as one steer, and were off like a flash. I was riding my Nigger Boy, and as the cattle headed toward me, away from the cause of their fright, I had to use both quirt and rowel to keep clear of the onrush. Fortunately we had a clear country near the bed ground, and while the terrified cattle pressed me close, my horse kept the lead. In the rumbling which ensued, all sounds were submerged by the general din; and I was only brought to the consciousness that I was not alone by seeing several distinct flashes from six-shooters on my left, and, realizing that I also had a gun, fired several times in the air in reply. I was soon joined by Priest and Officer, the latter

having lost no time in regaining his seat in the saddle, and the three of us held together some little distance, for it would have been useless to attempt to check or turn this onslaught of cattle in their first mad rush.

The wagon was camped about two hundred yards from the bed ground, and the herd had given ample warning to the boys asleep, so that if we three could hold our position in the lead, help would come to us as soon as the men in camp could reach their horses. Realizing the wide front of the running cattle, Priest sent Officer to the left and myself to the right, to point in the leaders in order to keep the herd from splitting or scattering, while he remained in the centre and led the herd. I soon gained the outside of the leaders, and by dropping back and coming up the line, pointed them in to the best of my ability. I had repeated this a number of times, even quiring some cattle along the outside, or burning a little powder in the face of some obstinate leader, when across the herd and to the rear I saw a succession of flashes like fireflies, which told me the boys were coming to our assistance.

Running is not a natural gait with cattle, and if we could only hold them together and prevent splitting up, in time they would tire, while the rear cattle could be depended on to follow the leaders. All we could hope to do was to force them to run straight, and in this respect we were succeeding splendidly, though to a certain extent it was a guess

in the dark. When they had run possibly a mile, I noticed a horseman overtake Priest. After they had ridden together a moment, one of them came over to my point, and the next minute our foreman was racing along by my side. In his impatience to check the run, he took me with him, and circling the leaders we reached the left point, by which time the remainder of the outfit had come up. Now massing our numbers, we fell on the left point, and amid the flash of guns deflected their course for a few moments. A dozen men, however, can cover but a small space, and we soon realized that we had turned only a few hundred head, for the momentum of the main body bore steadily ahead. Abandoning what few cattle we had turned, which, owing to their running ability, soon resumed their places in the lead, we attempted to turn them to the left. Stretching out our line until there was a man about every twenty feet, we threw our force against the right point and lead in the hope of gradually deviating their course. For a few minutes the attempt promised to be successful, but our cordon was too weak and the cattle went through between the riders, and we soon found a portion of our forces on either side of the herd, while a few of the boys were riding out of the rush in the lead.

On finding our forces thus divided, the five or six of us who remained on the right contented ourselves by pointing in the leaders, for the cattle, so far as we could tell, were running compactly. Our

foreman, however, was determined to turn the run, and after a few minutes' time rejoined us on the right, when under his leadership we circled the front of the herd and collected on the left point, when, for a third time, we repeated the same tactics in our efforts to turn the stampede. But in this, which was our final effort, we were attempting to turn them slowly and on a much larger circle, and with a promise of success. Suddenly in the dark we encountered a mesquite thicket into which the lead cattle tore with a crashing of brush and a rattle of horns that sent a chill up and down my spine. But there was no time to hesitate, for our horses were in the thicket, and with the herd closing in on us there was no alternative but to go through it, every man for himself. I gave Nigger a free rein, shutting my eyes and clutching both cantle and pommel to hold my seat; the black responded to the rowel and tore through the thicket, in places higher than my head, and came out in an open space considerably in the lead of the cattle.

This thicket must have been eight or ten rods wide, and checked the run to a slight extent; but as they emerged from it, they came out in scattering files and resumed their running. Being alone, and not knowing which way to turn, I rode to the right and front and soon found myself in the lead of quite a string of cattle. Nigger and I were piloting them where they listed, when Joe Stallings, hatless himself and his horse heaving, overtook me,

and the two of us gave those lead cattle all the trouble we knew how. But we did not attempt to turn them, for they had caught their wind in forcing the thicket, and were running an easy stroke. Several times we worried the leaders into a trot, but as other cattle in the rear came up, we were compelled to loosen out and allow them to resume their running, or they would have scattered on us like partridges. At this stage of the run, we had no idea where the rest of the outfit were, but both of us were satisfied the herd had scattered on leaving the mesquite thicket, and were possibly then running in half a dozen bunches like the one we were with.

Stallings's horse was badly winded, and on my suggestion, he dropped out on one side to try to get some idea how many cattle we were leading. He was gone some little time, and as Nigger cantered along easily in the lead, I managed to eject the shells from my six-shooter and refill the cylinder. On Joe's overtaking me again, he reported that there was a slender column of cattle, half a mile in length, following. As one man could easily lead this string of the herd until daybreak, I left Stallings with them and rode out to the left nearly a quarter of a mile, listening to hear if there were any cattle running to the left of those we were leading. It took me but a few minutes to satisfy myself that ours was the outside band on the left, and after I rejoined Joe, we made an effort to check our holding.

There were about fifty or sixty big steers in the lead of our bunch, and after worrying them into a trot, we opened in their front with our six-shooters, shooting into the ground in their very faces, and were rewarded by having them turn tail and head the other way. Taking advantage of the moment, we jumped our horses on the retreating leaders, and as fast as the rear cattle forged forward, easily turned them. Leaving Joe to turn the rear as they came up, I rode to the lead, unfastening my slicker as I went, and on reaching the turned leaders, who were running on an angle from their former course, flaunted my "fish" in their faces until they re-entered the rear guard of our string, and we soon had a mill going which kept them busy, and rested our horses. Once we had them milling, our trouble, as far as running was concerned, was over, for all two of us could hope to do was to let them exhaust themselves in this endless circle.

It then lacked an hour of daybreak, and all we could do was to ride around and wait for daylight. In the darkness preceding dawn, we had no idea of the number of our bunch, except as we could judge from the size and compactness of the milling cattle, which must have covered an acre or more. The humidity of the atmosphere, which had prevailed during the night, by dawn had changed until a heavy fog, cutting off our view on every hand, left us as much at sea as we had been previously. But with the break of day we rode through our

holding a number of times, splitting and scattering the milling cattle, and as the light of day brightened, we saw them quiet down and go to grazing as though they had just arisen from the bed ground. It was over an hour before the fog lifted sufficiently to give us any idea as to our whereabouts, and during the interim both Stallings and myself rode to the nearest elevation, firing a number of shots in the hope of getting an answer from the outfit, but we had no response.

When the sun was sufficiently high to scatter the mists which hung in clouds, there was not an object in sight by which we could determine our location. Whether we had run east, west, or south during the night neither of us knew, though both Stallings and myself were satisfied that we had never crossed the trail, and all we did know for a certainty was that we had between six and seven hundred head of cattle. Stallings had lost his hat, and I had one sleeve missing and both outside pockets torn out of my coat, while the mesquite thorns had left their marks on the faces of both of us, one particularly ugly cut marking Joe's right temple. "I've worn leggins for the last ten years," said Stallings to me, as we took an inventory of our disfigurements. "and for about ten seconds in forcing that mesquite thicket was the only time I ever drew interest on my investment. They're a heap like a six-shooter—wear them all your life and never have any use for them."

With a cigarette for breakfast, I left Joe to look after our bunch, and after riding several miles to the right, cut the trail of quite a band of cattle. In following up this trail I could easily see that some one was in their lead, as they failed to hold their course in any one direction for any distance, as free cattle would. After following this trail about three miles, I sighted the band of cattle, and on overtaking them, found two of our boys holding about half as many as Stallings had. They reported that The Rebel and Bob Blades had been with them until daybreak, but having the freshest horses had left them with the dawn and ridden away to the right, where it was supposed the main body of the herd had run. As Stallings's bunch was some three or four miles to the rear and left of this band, Wyatt Roundtree suggested that he go and pilot in Joe's cattle, as he felt positive that the main body were somewhere to our right. On getting directions from me as to where he would find our holding, he rode away, and I again rode off to the right, leaving Rod Wheat with their catch.

The sun was now several hours high, and as my black's strength was standing the test bravely, I cross-cut the country and was soon on another trail of our stampeded cattle. But in following this trail, I soon noticed two other horsemen preceding me. Knowing that my services would be too late, I only followed far enough to satisfy myself of the

*from the same I cut the Atascosa
10 horsemen - riding to the stampede
right.*

fact. The signs left by the running cattle were as easy to follow as a public road, and in places where the ground was sandy, the sod was cut up as if a regiment of cavalry had charged across it. Once again bearing off to the right, I rode for an elevation which ought to give me a good view of the country. Slight as this elevation was, on reaching it, I made out a large band of cattle under herd and as I was on the point of riding to them, saw our wagon and saddle horses heave in sight from a northwest quarter. Supposing they were following up the largest trail, I rode for the herd, where Flood and two of the boys had about twelve hundred cattle. From a comparison of notes, our foreman was able to account for all the men with the exception of two, and as these proved to be Blade and Priest, I could give him a satisfactory explanation as to their probable whereabouts. On my report of having sighted the wagon and *remuda*, Flood at once ordered me to meet and hurry them in, as not only he, but Strayhorn and Officer, were badly in need of a change of mounts.

I learned from McCann, who was doing the trail from the wagon, that the regular trail was to the west, the herd having crossed it within a quarter of a mile after leaving the bed ground. Joining Honeyman, I took the first horse which came within reach of my rope, and with a fresh mount under me, we rushed the saddle horses past the wagon and shortly came up with our foreman.

There we rounded in the horses as best we could without the aid of the wagon, and before McCann arrived, all had fresh mounts and were ready for orders. This was my first trip on the trail, and I was hungry and thirsty enough to hope something would be said about eating, but that seemed to be the last idea in our foreman's mind. Instead, he ordered me to take the two other boys with me, and after putting them on the trail of the bunch which The Rebel and Blades were following, to drift in what cattle we had held on our left. But as we went, we managed to encounter the wagon and get a drink and a canteen of water from McCann before we galloped away on our mission. After riding a mile or so together, we separated, and on my arrival at the nearest bunch, I found Roundtree and Stallings coming up with the larger holding. Throwing the two bunches together, we drifted them a free clip towards camp. We soon sighted the main herd, and saw across to our right and about five miles distant two of our men bringing in another bunch. As soon as we turned our cattle into the herd, Flood ordered me, on account of my light weight, to meet this bunch, find out where the last cattle were, and go to their assistance.

With a hungry look in the direction of our wagon, I obeyed, and on meeting Durham and Borrowstone, learned that the outside bunch on the right, which had got into the regular trail, had not been

checked until daybreak. All they knew about their location was that the up stage from Oakville had seen two men with Circle Dot cattle about five miles below, and had sent up word by the driver that they had something like four hundred head. With this meagre information, I rode away in the direction where one would naturally expect to find our absent men, and after scouring the country for an hour sighted a single horseman on an elevation, whom from the gray mount I knew for Quince Forrest. He was evidently on the lookout for some one to pilot them in. They had been drifting like lost sheep ever since dawn, but we soon had their cattle pointed in the right direction, and Forrest taking the lead, Quarternight and I put the necessary push behind them. Both of them cursed me roundly for not bringing them a canteen of water, though they were well aware that in an emergency like the present, our foreman would never give a thought to anything but the recovery of the herd. Our comfort was nothing; men were cheap, but cattle cost money.

We reached the camp about two o'clock, and found the outfit cutting out range cattle which had been absorbed into the herd during the run. Throwing in our contingent, we joined in the work, and though Forrest and Quarternight were as good as afoot, there were no orders for a change of mounts, to say nothing of food and drink. Several hundred mixed cattle were in the herd, and after they

had been cut out, we lined our cattle out for a count. In the absence of Priest, Flood and John Officer did the counting, and as the hour of the day made the cattle sluggish, they lined through between the counters as though they had never done anything but walk in their lives. The count showed sixteen short of twenty-eight hundred, which left us yet over three hundred out. ✓ But good men were on their trail, and leaving two men on herd, the rest of us obeyed the most welcome orders of the day when Flood intimated that we would "eat a bite and go after the rest."

As we had been in our saddles since one or two o'clock the morning before, it is needless to add that our appetites were equal to the spread which our cook had waiting for us. Our foreman, as though fearful of the loss of a moment's time, sent ✓ Honeyman to rustle in the horses before we had finished our dinners. Once the *remuda* was corralled, under the rush of a tireless foreman, dinner was quickly over, and fresh horses became the order of the moment. The Atascosa, our nearest water, lay beyond the regular trail to the west, and leaving orders for the outfit to drift the herd into it and water, Flood and myself started in search of our absent men, not forgetting to take along two extra horses as a remount for Blades and Priest. The leading of these extra horses fell to me, but with the loose end of a rope in Jim Flood's hand as he followed, it took fast riding to keep clear of them.

After reaching the trail of the missing cattle, our foreman set a pace for five or six miles which would have carried us across the Nueces by nightfall, and we were only checked by Moss Strayhorn riding in on an angle and intercepting us in our headlong gait. The missing cattle were within a mile of us to the right, and we turned and rode to them. Strayhorn explained to us that the cattle had struck some recent fencing on their course, and after following down the fence several miles had encountered an offset, and the angle had held the squad until The Rebel and Blades overtook them. When Officer and he reached them, they were unable to make any accurate count, because of the range cattle amongst them, and they had considered it advisable to save horseflesh and not cut them until more help was available. When we came up with the cattle, my bunkie and Blades looked wistfully at our saddles, and anticipating their want, I untied my slicker, well remembering the reproof of Quarternight and Forrest, and produced a full canteen of water, — warm of course, but no less welcome.

No sooner were saddles shifted than we held up the bunch, cut out the range cattle, counted, and found we had some three hundred and thirty odd Circle Dots, — our number more than complete. With nothing now missing, Flood took the loose horses and two of the boys with him and returned to the herd, leaving three of us behind to bring in this last contingent of our stampeded cattle. This

squad were nearly all large steers, and had run fully twenty miles, before, thanks to an angle in a fence, they had been checked. As our foreman galloped away, leaving us behind, Bob Blades said, —

“Has n’t the boss got a wiggle on himself to-day! If he’d made this old world, he’d have made it in half a day, and gone fishing in the afternoon — if his horses had held out.”

We reached the Atascosa shortly after the arrival of the herd, and after holding the cattle on the water for an hour, grazed them the remainder of the evening, for if there was any virtue in their having full stomachs, we wanted to benefit from it. While grazing that evening, we recrossed the trail on an angle, and camped in the most open country we could find, about ten miles below our camp of the night before. Every precaution was taken to prevent a repetition of the run; our best horses were chosen for night duty, as our regular ones were too exhausted; every advantage of elevation for a bed ground was secured, and thus fortified against accident, we went into camp for the night. But the expected never happens on the trail, and the sun arose the next morning over our herd grazing in peace and contentment on the flowery prairies which border on the Atascosa.

CHAPTER V

A DRY DRIVE

OUR cattle quieted down nicely after this run and the next few weeks brought not an incident worth recording. There was no regular trail through the lower counties, so we simply kept to the open country. Spring had advanced until the prairies were swarded with grass and flowers, which water, though scarcer, was to be had at least once daily. We passed to the west of San Antonio — an outfitting point which all herds touched in passing northward — and Flood and our cook took the wagon and went in for supplies. But the outfit with the herd kept on, now launched on a broad well-defined trail, in places seventy-five yards wide where all local trails blent into the one common pathway, known in those days as the Old Western Trail. It is not in the province of this narrative to deal with the cause or origin of this cattle trail though it marked the passage of many hundreds of thousand cattle which preceded our Circle Dot and was destined to afford an outlet to several millions more to follow. The trail proper consisted of many scores of irregular cow paths, united into one broad passageway, narrowing and widening at

conditions permitted, yet ever leading northward. After a few years of continued use, it became as well defined as the course of a river.

Several herds which had started farther up country were ahead of ours, and this we considered an advantage, for wherever one herd could go, it was reasonable that others could follow. Flood knew the trail as well as any of the other foremen, but there was one thing he had not taken into consideration: the drouth of the preceding summer. True, there had been local spring showers, sufficient to start the grass nicely, but water in such quantities as we needed was growing daily more difficult to find. The first week after leaving San Antonio, our foreman scouted in quest of water a full day in advance of the herd. One evening he returned to us with the news that we were in for a dry drive, for after passing the next chain of lakes it was sixty miles to the next water, and reports regarding the water supply even after crossing this arid stretch were very conflicting.

"While I know every foot of this trail through here," said the foreman, "there's several things that look scaly. There are only five herds ahead of us, and the first three went through the old route, but the last two, after passing Indian Lakes, for some reason or other turned and went westward. These last herds may be stock cattle, pushing out west to new ranges; but I don't like the outlook.

and by that time we could be two thirds of the way through. I've made this drive before without a drop of water on the way, and would n't dread it now, if there was any certainty of water at the other end. I reckon there's nothing to do but tackle her; but is n't this a hell of a country? I've ridden fifty miles to-day and never saw a soul."

The Indian Lakes, some seven in number, were natural reservoirs with rocky bottoms, and about a mile apart. We watered at ten o'clock the next day, and by night camped fifteen miles on our way. There was plenty of good grazing for the cattle and horses, and no trouble was experienced the first night. McCann had filled an extra twenty gallon keg for this trip. Water was too precious an article to be lavish with, so we shook the dust from our clothing and went unwashed. This was no serious deprivation, and no one could be critical of another, for we were all equally dusty and dirty. The next morning by daybreak the cattle were thrown off the bed ground and started grazing before the sun could dry out what little moisture the grass had absorbed during the night. The heat of the past week had been very oppressive, and in order to avoid it as much as possible, we made late and early drives. Before the wagon passed the herd during the morning drive, what few canteens we had were filled with water for the men. The *remuda* was kept with the herd, and four changes of mounts were made during the day, in order not

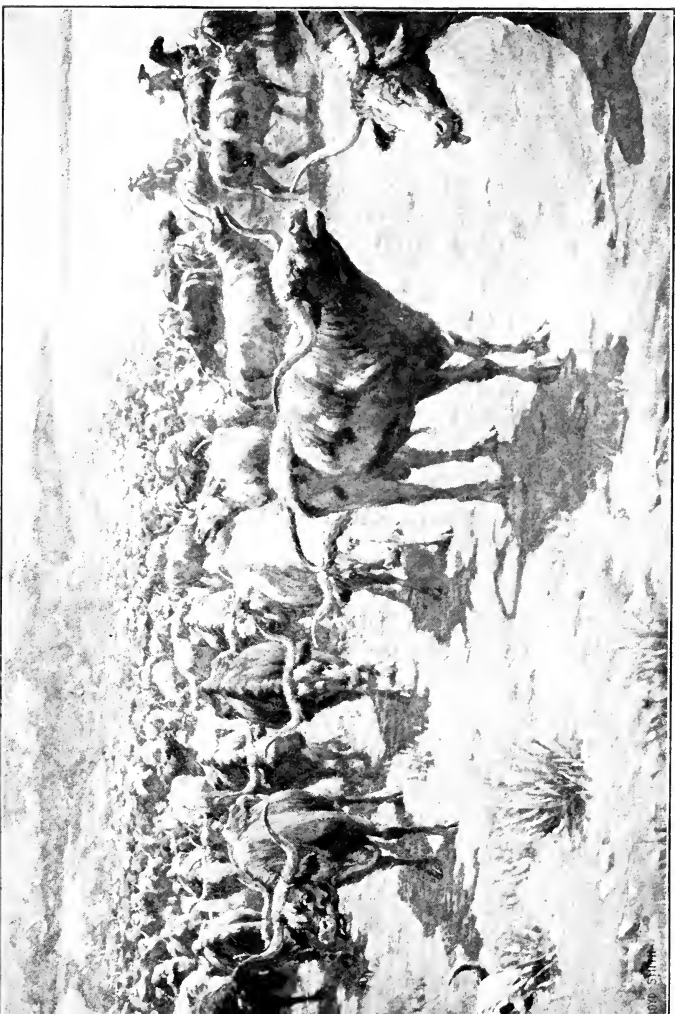
to exhaust any one horse. Several times for an hour or more, the herd was allowed to lie down and rest; but by the middle of the afternoon thirst made them impatient and restless, and the point men were compelled to ride steadily in the lead in order to hold the cattle to a walk. A number of times during the afternoon we attempted to graze them, but not until the twilight of evening was it possible.

After the fourth change of horses was made, Honeyman pushed on ahead with the saddle stock and overtook the wagon. Under Flood's orders he was to tie up all the night horses, for if the cattle could be induced to graze, we would not bed them down before ten that night, and all hands would be required with the herd. McCann had instructions to make camp on the divide, which was known to be twenty-five miles from our camp of the night before, or forty miles from the Indian Lakes. As we expected, the cattle grazed willingly after nightfall, and with a fair moon, we allowed them to scatter freely while grazing forward. The beacon of McCann's fire on the divide was in sight over an hour before the herd grazed up to camp, all hands remaining to bed the thirsty cattle. The herd was given triple the amount of space usually required for bedding, and even then for nearly an hour scarcely half of them lay down.

We were handling the cattle as humanely as pos-

✓ night were doubled, six men on the first half and the same on the latter, Bob Blades being detailed to assist Honeyman in night-herding the saddle horses. If any of us got more than an hour's sleep that night, he was lucky. Flood, McCann, and the horse wranglers did not even try to rest. To those of us who could find time to eat, our cook kept open house. Our foreman knew that a well-fed man can stand an incredible amount of hardship, and appreciated the fact that on the trail a good cook is a valuable asset. Our outfit therefore was cheerful to a man, and jokes and songs helped to (while away the weary hours of the night.

The second guard, under Flood, pushed the cattle off their beds an hour before dawn, and before they were relieved had urged the herd more than five miles on the third day's drive over this waterless mesa. In spite of our economy of water, after breakfast on this third morning there was scarcely enough left to fill the canteens for the day. In view of this, we could promise ourselves no midday meal — except a can of tomatoes to the man; so the wagon was ordered to drive through to the expected water ahead, while the saddle horses were held available as on the day before for frequent changing of mounts. ✓ The day turned out to be one of torrid heat, and before the middle of the forenoon, the cattle lolled their tongues in despair, while their sullen lowing surged through from rear to lead and back again in piteous yet ominous appeal. The



HEAT AND THIRST

only relief we could offer was to travel them slowly, as they spurned every opportunity offered them either to graze or to lie down.

It was nearly noon when we reached the last divide, and sighted the scattering timber of the expected watercourse. The enforced order of the day before — to hold the herd in a walk and prevent exertion and heating — now required four men in the lead, while the rear followed over a mile behind, dogged and sullen. Near the middle of the afternoon, McCann returned on one of his mules with the word that it was a question if there was water enough to water even the horse stock. The preceding outfit, so he reported, had dug a shallow well in the bed of the creek, from which he had filled his kegs, but the stock water was a mere loblolly. On receipt of this news, we changed mounts for the fifth time that day; and Flood, taking Forrest, the cook, and the horse wrangler, pushed on ahead with the *remuda* to the waterless stream.

The outlook was anything but encouraging. Flood and Forrest scouted the creek up and down for ten miles in a fruitless search for water. The outfit held the herd back until the twilight of evening, when Flood returned and confirmed McCann's report. It was twenty miles yet to the next water ahead, and if the horse stock could only be watered thoroughly, Flood was determined to make the at-

was digging an extra well, and he expressed the belief that by hollowing out a number of holes enough water could be secured for the saddle stock. Honeyman had corralled the horses and was letting only a few go to the water at a time, while the night horses were being thoroughly watered as fast as the water rose in the well.

Holding the herd this third night required all hands. Only a few men at a time were allowed to go into camp and eat, for the herd refused even to lie down. What few cattle attempted to rest were prevented by the more restless ones. By spell they would mill, until riders were sent through the herd at a break-neck pace to break up the groups. During these milling efforts of the herd, we drifted over a mile from camp; but by the light of moon and stars and the number of riders, scattering was prevented. As the horses were loose for the night we could not start them on the trail until daybreak gave us a change of mounts, so we lost the early start of the morning before.

Good cloudy weather would have saved us, but in its stead was a sultry morning without a breath of air, which bespoke another day of sizzling heat. We had not been on the trail over two hours before the heat became almost unbearable to man and beast. Had it not been for the condition of the herd, all might yet have gone well; but over three days had now elapsed without water for the cattle and they became feverish and ungovernable. The

lead cattle turned back several times, wandering aimlessly in any direction, and it was with considerable difficulty that the herd could be held on the trail. The rear overtook the lead, and the cattle gradually lost all semblance of a trail herd. Our horses were fresh, however, and after about two hours' work, we once more got the herd strung out in trailing fashion; but before a mile had been covered, the leaders again turned, and the cattle congregated into a mass of unmanageable animals, milling and lowing in their fever and thirst. The milling only intensified their sufferings from the heat, and the outfit split and quartered them again and again, in the hope that this unfortunate outbreak might be checked. No sooner was the milling stopped than they would surge hither and yon, sometimes half a mile, as ungovernable as the waves of an ocean. After wasting several hours in this manner, they finally turned back over the trail, and the utmost efforts of every man in the outfit failed to check them. We threw our ropes in their faces, and when this failed, we resorted to shooting; but in defiance of the fusillade and the smoke they walked sullenly through the line of horsemen across their front. Six-shooters were discharged so close to the leaders' faces as to singe their hair, yet, under a noonday sun, they disregarded this and every other device to turn them, and passed wholly out of our control. In a number of instances wild steers

✓ the first time a fact dawned on us that chilled the marrow in our bones, — *the herd was going blind*

The bones of men and animals that lie bleaching along the trails abundantly testify that this was not the first instance in which the plain had baffled the determination of man. It was now evident that nothing short of water would stop the herd, and we rode aside and let them pass. As the outfit turned back to the wagon, our foreman seemed dazed by the sudden and unexpected turn of affairs, but rallied and met the emergency.

"There's but one thing left to do," said he, as we rode along, "and that is to hurry the outfit back to Indian Lakes. The herd will travel day and night and instinct can be depended on to carry them to the only water they know. It's too late to be of any use now, but it's plain why those last two herds turned off at the lakes; some one had gone back and warned them of the very thing we've met. We must beat them to the lakes, for water is the only thing that will check them now. It's a good thing that they are strong, and five or six days without water will hardly kill any. It was no vague statement of the man who said if he owned hell and Texas, he'd rent Texas and live in hell, for if this is n't Billy hell, I'd like to know what you call it.

We spent an hour watering the horses from the wells of our camp of the night before, and about two o'clock started back over the trail for Indian Lakes. We overtook the abandoned herd during the after-

noon. They were strung out nearly five miles in length, and were walking about a three-mile gait. Four men were given two extra horses apiece and left to throw in the stragglers in the rear, with instructions to follow them well into the night, and again in the morning as long as their canteens lasted. The remainder of the outfit pushed on without a halt, except to change mounts, and reached the lakes shortly after midnight. There we secured the first good sleep of any consequence for three days.

It was fortunate for us that there were no range cattle at these lakes, and we had only to cover a front of about six miles to catch the drifting herd. It was nearly noon the next day before the cattle began to arrive at the water holes in squads of from twenty to fifty. Pitiful objects as they were, it was a novelty to see them reach the water and slack their thirst. Wading out into the lakes until their sides were half covered, they would stand and low in a soft moaning voice, often for half an hour before attempting to drink. Contrary to our expectation, they drank very little at first, but stood in the water for hours. After coming out, they would lie down and rest for hours longer, and then drink again before attempting to graze, their thirst overpowering hunger. That they were blind there was no question, but with the causes that produced it once removed, it was probable their eyesight would

By early evening, the rear guard of our outfit returned and reported the tail end of the herd some twenty miles behind when they left them. During the day not over a thousand head reached the lakes, and towards evening we put these under herd and easily held them during the night. All four of the men who constituted the rear guard were sent back the next morning to prod up the rear again, and during the night at least a thousand more came into the lakes, which held them better than a hundred men. With the recovery of the cattle our hopes grew, and with the gradual accessions to the herd, confidence was again completely restored. Our saddle stock, not having suffered as had the cattle, were in a serviceable condition, and while a few men were all that were necessary to hold the herd, the others scoured the country for miles in search of any possible stragglers which might have missed the water.

During the forenoon of the third day at the lakes, Nat Straw, the foreman of Ellison's first herd on the trail, rode up to our camp. He was scouting for water for his herd, and, when our situation was explained and he had been interrogated regarding loose cattle, gave us the good news that no stragglers in our road brand had been met by their outfit. This was welcome news, for we had made no count yet, and feared some of them, in their locoed condition, might have passed the water during the night. Our misfortune was an ill wind by which

Straw profited, for he had fully expected to keep on by the old route, but with our disaster staring him in the face, a similar experience was to be avoided. His herd reached the lakes during the middle of the afternoon, and after watering, turned and went westward over the new route taken by the two herds which preceded us. He had a herd of about three thousand steers, and was driving to the Dodge market. After the experience we had just gone through, his herd and outfit were a welcome sight. Flood made inquiries after Lovell's second herd, under my brother Bob as foreman, but Straw had seen or heard nothing of them, having come from Goliad County with his cattle.

After the Ellison herd had passed on and out of sight, our squad which had been working the country to the northward, over the route by which the abandoned herd had returned, came in with the information that that section was clear of cattle, and that they had only found three head dead from thirst. On the fourth morning, as the herd left the bed ground, a count was ordered, and to our surprise we counted out twenty-six head more than we had received on the banks of the Rio Grande a month before. As there had been but one previous occasion to count, the number of strays absorbed into our herd was easily accounted for by Priest: "If a steer herd could increase on the trail, why should n't ours, that had over a thousand cows in

the ages of our herd were taken into consideration. But 1882 in Texas was a liberal day and generation, and "cattle stealing" was too drastic a term to use for the chance gain of a few cattle, when the foundations of princely fortunes were being laid with rope and a branding iron.

In order to give the Ellison herd a good start for us, we only moved our wagon to the farthest land and went into camp for the day. The herd had recovered its normal condition by this time, and the troubles of the past week not a trace remained. Instead, our herd grazed in leisurely content on a thousand acres, while with the exception of a few men on herd, the outfit lounged around the wagon and beguiled the time with cards.

We had undergone an experience which bunkie, The Rebel, termed "an interesting incident in his checkered career," but which not even he would have cared to repeat. That night while the herd together — the cattle resting in all contentment — we rode one round together, and as I rolled a cigarette he gave me an old war story:

"They used to tell the story in the army, that during one of the winter retreats, a cavalryman, riding along in the wake of the column at night, saw a hat apparently floating in the mud and water. In vain he hoped that it might be a better hat than the one he was wearing, he dismounted to get it. Feeling his way carefully through the ooze until he reached the hat, he was surprised to find a man underneath a

wearing it. 'Hello, comrade,' he sang out, 'can I lend you a hand?'

"'No, no,' replied the fellow, 'I'm all right; I've got a good mule yet under me.'"

CHAPTER VI

A REMINISCENT NIGHT

ON the ninth morning we made our second start from the Indian Lakes. An amusing incident occurred during the last night of our camp at these water holes. Coyotes had been hanging around our camp for several days, and during the quiet hours of the night these scavengers of the plain had often ventured in near the wagon in search of scraps of meat or anything edible. Rod Wheeler and Ash Borrowstone had made their beds down some distance from the wagon; the coyotes as they circled round the camp came near their bed, and in sniffing about awoke Borrowstone. There was no more danger of attack from these cowards than from field mice, but their presence annoyed Ash, and as he dared not shoot, he threw his boots at the varmints. Imagine his chagrin the next morning to find that one boot had landed among the bank embers of the camp-fire, and was burned to a crisp. It was looked upon as a capital joke by the outfit, as there was no telling when we would reach a stage where he could secure another pair.

The new trail, after bearing to the westward for several days, turned northward, paralleling the c

one, and a week later we came into the old trail over a hundred miles north of the Indian Lakes. With the exception of one thirty-mile drive without water, no fault could be found with the new trail. A few days after coming into the old trail, we passed Mason, a point where trail herds usually put in for supplies. As we passed during the middle of the afternoon, the wagon and a number of the boys went into the burg. Quince Forrest and Billy Honeyman were the only two in the outfit for whom there were any letters, with the exception of a letter from Lovell, which was common property. Never having been over the trail before, and not even knowing that it was possible to hear from home, I wasn't expecting any letter; but I felt a little twinge of homesickness that night when Honeyman read us certain portions of his letter, which was from his sister. Forrest's letter was from a sweetheart, and after reading it a few times, he burnt it, and that was all we ever knew of its contents, for he was too foxy to say anything, even if it had not been unfavorable. Borrowstone swaggered around camp that evening in a new pair of boots, which had the Lone Star set in filigree-work in their red tops.

At our last camp at the lakes, The Rebel and I, as partners, had been shamefully beaten in a game of seven-up by Bull Durham and John Officer, and had demanded satisfaction in another trial around the fire that night. We borrowed McGarr's lan-

tern, and by the aid of it and the camp-fire had an abundance of light for our game. In the absence of a table, we unrolled a bed and sat down Indian fashion over a game of cards in which all friendship ceased.

The outfit, with the exception of myself, had come from the same neighborhood, and an item in Honeyman's letter causing considerable comment was a wedding which had occurred since the outfit had left. It seemed that a number of the boys had sparked the bride in times past, and now that she was married, their minds naturally became reminiscent over old sweethearts.

✓ "The way I make it out," said Honeyman, in commenting on the news, "is that the girl had met this fellow over in the next county while visiting her cousins the year before. My sister gives it as a horseback opinion that she'd been engaged to this fellow nearly eight months; girls, you know, sabe each other that way. Well, it won't affect my appetite any if all the girls I know get married while I'm gone."

"You certainly have never experienced the tender passion," said Fox Quarternight to our horse wrangler, as he lighted his pipe with a brand from the fire. "Now I have. That's the reason why I sympathize with these old beaus of the bride. Of course I was too old to stand any show on her string and I reckon the fellow who got her ain't so powerful much, except his veneering and being

stranger, which was a big advantage. To be sure, if she took a smile to this stranger, no other fellow could check her with a three-quarter rope and a snubbing post. I've seen girls walk right by a dozen good fellows and fawn over some scrub. My experience teaches me that when there's a woman in it, it's haphazard pot luck with no telling which way the cat will hop. You can't play any system, and merit cuts little figure in general results."

"Fox," said Durham, while Officer was shuffling the cards, "your auger seems well oiled and working keen to-night. Suppose you give us that little experience of yours in love affairs. It will be a treat to those of us who have never been in love, and won't interrupt the game a particle. Cut loose, won't you?"

"It's a long time back," said Quarternight, meditatively, "and the scars have all healed, so I don't mind telling it. I was born and raised on the border of the Blue Grass Region in Kentucky. I had the misfortune to be born of poor but honest parents, as they do in stories; no hero ever had the advantage of me in that respect. In love affairs, however, it's a high card in your hand to be born rich. The country around my old home had good schools, so we had the advantage of a good education. When I was about nineteen, I went away from home one winter to teach school—a little country school about fifteen miles from home. But

you a dead rank stranger. The trustee of the township was shucking corn when I went to apply for the school. I simply whipped out my peg and helped him shuck out a shock or two while we talked over school matters. The dinner bell rang and he insisted on my staying for dinner with him. Well, he gave me a better school than I had asked for — better neighborhood, he said — and told me to board with a certain family who had no children. He gave his reasons, but that's immaterial. They were friends of his, so I learned afterwards. They proved to be fine people. The woman was one of those kindly souls who never know where to stop. She planned and schemed to marry me off in spite of myself. The first month that I was with them she told me all about the girls in that immediate neighborhood. In fact, she rather got me unduly excited, being a youth and somewhat verdant. She dwelt powerful heavy on a girl who lived in a big brick house which stood back of the road some distance. This girl had gone to school at a seminary for young ladies near Lexington,— studied music and painting and was 'way up on everything. She described her to me as black-eyed with raven tresses just like you read about in novels.

"Things were rocking along nicely, when a few days before Christmas a little girl who belonged to the family who lived in the brick house brought me a note one morning. It was an invitation to take supper with them the following evening. The no-

was written in a pretty hand, and the name signed to it — I'm satisfied now it was a forgery. My landlady agreed with me on that point; in fact, she may have mentioned it first. I never ought to have taken her into my confidence like I did. But I wanted to consult her, showed her the invitation, and asked her advice. She was in the seventh heaven of delight; had me answer it at once, accept the invitation with pleasure and a lot of stuff that I never used before — she had been young once herself. I used up five or six sheets of paper in writing the answer, spoilt one after another, and the one I did send was a flat failure compared to the one I received. Well, the next evening when it was time to start, I was nervous and uneasy. It was nearly dark when I reached the house, but I wanted it that way. Say, but when I knocked on the front door of that house it was with fear and trembling. 'Is this Mr. Quarternight?' inquired a very affable lady who received me. I knew I was one of old man Quarternight's seven boys, and admitted that that was my name, though it was the first time any one had ever called me *mister*. I was welcomed, ushered in, and introduced all around. There were a few small children whom I knew, so I managed to talk to them. The girl whom I was being braced against was not a particle overrated, but sustained the Kentucky reputation for beauty. She made herself so pleasant and agreeable that my

came in I was cured entirely. He was gruff and hearty, opened his mouth and laughed deep. He built right up to him. We talked about cattle and horses until supper was announced. He was real sorry I had n't come earlier, so as to look at a three year old colt that he set a heap of store by. He showed him to me after supper with a lantern. Fine colt, too. I don't remember much about the supper, except that it was fine and I came near spilling my coffee several times, my hands were so large and my coat sleeves so short. When we returned from looking at the colt, we went into the parlor. Several fellows, it was a little the nicest thing that ever went against. Carpet that made you think you were going to bog down every step, springy like marsh land, and I was glad I came. Then the younger children were ordered to retire, and shortly afterward the man and his wife followed suit.

"When I heard the old man throw his heavy boots on the floor in the next room, I realized that I was left all alone with their charming daughter. All my fears of the early part of the evening tried to crowd on me again, but were calmed by the girl who sang and played on the piano with no audience but me. Then she interested me by telling her school experiences, and how glad she was that they were over. Finally she lugged out a great big family album, and sat down beside of me on one of these horsehair sofas. That album had a clasp of silver, a buckle of pure silver, same as these eight-

dollar bridles. While we were looking at the pictures — some of the old varmints had fought in the Revolutionary war, so she said — I noticed how close we were sitting together. Then we sat farther apart after we had gone through the album, one on each end of the sofa, and talked about the neighborhood, until I suddenly remembered that I had to go. While she was getting my hat and I was getting away, somehow she had me promise to take dinner with them on Christmas.

“For the next two or three months it was hard to tell if I lived at my boarding house or at the brick. If I failed to go, my landlady would hatch up some errand and send me over. If she had n’t been such a good woman, I’d never forgive her for leading me to the sacrifice like she did. Well, about two weeks before school was out, I went home over Saturday and Sunday. Those were fatal days in my life. When I returned on Monday morning, there was a letter waiting for me. It was from the girl’s mamma. There had been a quilting in the neighborhood on Saturday, and at this meet of the local gossips, some one had hinted that there was liable to be a wedding as soon as school was out. Mamma was present, and neither admitted nor denied the charge. But there was a woman at this quilting who had once lived over in our neighborhood and felt it her duty to enlighten the company as to who I was. I got all this later from my land-

here in this section think our teacher is the son of that big farmer who raises so many cattle and horses. Why, I've known both families of those Quaternights for nigh on to thirty year. Our teacher is one of old John Fox's boys, the Irish Quaternights, who live up near the salt licks on Dog Run. They were always so poor that the children never had enough to eat and hardly half enough to wear.'

"This plain statement of facts fell like a bombshell on mamma. She started a private investigation of her own, and her verdict was in that letter. It was a centre shot. That evening when I locked the schoolhouse door it was for the last time, for I never unlocked it again. My landlady, dear old womanly soul, tried hard to have me teach the school out at least, but I did n't see it that way. The cause of education in Kentucky might have gone straight to eternal hell, before I'd have stayed another day in that neighborhood. I had money enough to get to Texas with, and here I am. When a fellow gets it burnt into him like a brand that way once, it lasts him quite a while. He'll feel his way next time."

"That was rather a raw deal to give a fellow, said Officer, who had been listening while playing cards. "Did n't you never see the girl again?"

"No; nor you would n't want to either if that letter had been written to you. And some folks claim that seven is a lucky number; there were

seven boys in our family and nary one ever married."

"That experience of Fox's," remarked Honeyman, after a short silence, "is almost similar to one I had. Before Lovell and Flood adopted me, I worked for a horse man down on the Nueces. Every year he drove up the trail a large herd of horse stock. We drove to the same point on the trail each year, and I happened to get acquainted up there with a family that had several girls in it. The youngest girl in the family and I seemed to understand each other fairly well. I had to stay at the horse camp most of the time, and in one way and another did not get to see her as much as I would have liked. When we sold out the herd, I hung around for a week or so, and spent a month's wages showing her the cloud with the silver lining. She stood it all easy, too. When the outfit went home, of course I went with them. I was banking plenty strong, however, that next year, if there was a good market in horses, I'd take her home with me. I had saved my wages and rustled around, and when we started up the trail next year, I had forty horses of my own in the herd. I had figured they would bring me a thousand dollars, and there was my wages besides.

"When we reached this place, we held the herd out twenty miles, so it was some time before I got into town to see the girl. But the first time I did

who had run away with some renegade from Texas a year or so before, had drifted back home lately with tears in her eyes and a big fat baby boy in her arms. She warned me to keep away from the house, for men from Texas were at a slight discount right then in that family. The girl seemed to regret it and talked reasonable, and I thought I could see encouragement. I did n't crowd matters, nor did her folks forget me when they heard that Byler had come in with a horse herd from the Nueces. I met the girl away from home several times during the summer, and learned that they kept hot water on tap to scald me if I ever dared to show up. One son-in-law from Texas had simply surfeited that family — there was no other vacancy. About the time we closed out and were again ready to go home, there was a cattleman's ball given in this little trail town. We stayed over several days to take in this ball, as I had some plans of my own. My girl was at the ball all easy enough, but she warned me that her brother was watching me. I paid no attention to him, and danced with her right along begging her to run away with me. It was obviously the only play to make. But the more I'd 'sued her the more she'd 'fuse. The family was on the prod bigger than a wolf, and there was no use reasoning with them. After I had had every dance with her for an hour or so, her brother coolly stepped in and took her home. The next morning he felt it his duty, as his sister's protector, to hun-

me up and inform me that if I even spoke to his sister again, he'd shoot me like a dog.

"Is that a bluff, or do you mean it for a real play?" I inquired, politely.

"You'll find that it will be real enough," he answered, angrily.

"Well, now, that's too bad," I answered; "I'm really sorry that I can't promise to respect your request. But this much I can assure you: any time that you have the leisure and want to shoot me, just cut loose your dog. But remember this one thing — that it will be my second shot."

"Are you sure you wasn't running a blazer yourself, or is the wind merely rising?" inquired Durham, while I was shuffling the cards for the next deal.

"Well, if I was, I hung up my gentle honk before his eyes and ears and gave him free license to call it. The truth is, I didn't pay any more attention to him than I would to an empty bottle. I reckon the girl was all right, but the family were these razor-backed, barnyard savages. It makes me hot under the collar yet when I think of it. They'd have lawed me if I had, but I ought to have shot him and checked the breed."

"Why didn't you run off with her?" inquired Fox, dryly.

"Well, of course a man of your nerve is always capable of advising others. But you see, I'm strong on the breed. Now a girl can't show her

'true colors like the girl's brother did, but get her in the harness once, and then she'll show you the white of her eye, balk, and possibly kick over the wagon tongue. No, I believe in the breed — blood 'll tell."

"I worked for a cowman once," said Bull, irrelevantly, "and they told it on him that he lost twenty thousand dollars the night he was married."

"How, gambling?" I inquired.

"No. The woman he married claimed to be worth twenty thousand dollars and she never had a cent. Spades trump?"

"No; hearts," replied The Rebel. "I used to know a foreman up in DeWitt County, — 'Honest' John Glen they called him. He claimed the only chance he ever had to marry was a widow, and the reason he did n't marry her was, he was too honest to take advantage of a dead man."

While we paid little attention to wind or weather, this was an ideal night, and we were laggard in seeking our blankets. Yarn followed yarn; for nearly every one of us, either from observation or from practical experience, had a slight acquaintance with the great mastering passion. But the poetical had not been developed in us to an appreciative degree, so we discussed the topic under consideration much as we would have done horses or cattle.

Finally the game ended. A general yawn went

the round of the loungers about the fire. The second guard had gone on, and when the first rode in, Joe Stallings, halting his horse in passing the fire, called out sociably, "That muley steer, the white four year old, did n't like to bed down amongst the others, so I let him come out and lay down by himself. You'll find him over on the far side of the herd. You all remember how wild he was when we first started? Well, you can ride within three feet of him to-night, and he'll grunt and act sociable and never offer to get up. I promised him that he might sleep alone as long as he was good; I just love a good steer. Make down our bed, pardner; I'll be back as soon as I picket my horse."

CHAPTER VII

THE COLORADO

THE month of May found our Circle Dot herd, spite of all drawbacks, nearly five hundred miles on its way. For the past week we had been traveling over that immense tableland which skirts the arid portion of western Texas. A few days before while passing the blue mountains which stand as a southern sentinel in the chain marking the headwaters of the Concho River, we had our first glimpse of the hills. In its almost primitive condition, the country was generous, supplying everything wanted for sustenance of horses and cattle. The grass at this stage of the season was well matured, the herd taking on flesh in a very gratifying manner, and, while we had crossed some rocky country, lame and sore-footed cattle had as yet caused no serious trouble.

One morning when within one day's drive of the Colorado River, as our herd was leaving the bad ground, the last guard encountered a bunch of cattle drifting back down the trail. There were nearly fifty head of the stragglers; and as one of our men on guard turned them to throw them away from our herd, the road brand caught his eye, a

he recognized the strays as belonging to the Ellison herd which had passed us at the Indian Lakes some ten days before. Flood's attention once drawn to the brand, he ordered them thrown into our herd. It was evident that some trouble had occurred with the Ellison cattle, possibly a stampede; and it was but a neighborly act to lend any assistance in our power. As soon as the outfit could breakfast, mount, and take the herd, Flood sent Priest and me to scout the country to the westward of the trail, while Bob Blades and Ash Borrowstone started on a similar errand to the eastward, with orders to throw in any drifting cattle in the Ellison road brand. Within an hour after starting, the herd encountered several straggling bands, and as Priest and I were on the point of returning to the herd, we almost overrode a bunch of eighty odd head lying down in some broken country. They were gaunt and tired, and The Rebel at once pronounced their stiffened movements the result of a stampede.

We were drifting them back towards the trail, when Nat Straw and two of his men rode out from our herd and met us. "I always did claim that it was better to be born lucky than handsome," said Straw as he rode up. "One week Flood saves me from a dry drive, and the very next one, he's just the right distance behind to catch my drift from a nasty stampede. Not only that, but my peelers and I are riding Circle Dot horses, as well as

reaching the wagon in time for breakfast and lining our flues with Lovell's good chuck. It's too good luck to last, I'm afraid.

"I'm not hankering for the dramatic in life, but we had a run last night that would curl your hair. Just about midnight a bunch of range cattle ran into us, and before you could say Jack Robinson, our dogies had vamoosed the ranch and were running in half a dozen different directions. We rounded them up the best we could in the dark, and then I took a couple of men and came back down the trail about twenty miles to catch any drift when day dawned. But you see there's nothing like being lucky and having good neighbors, — cattle caught, fresh horses, and a warm breakfast all waiting for you. I'm such a lucky dog, it's a wonder some one didn't steal me when I was little. I can't help it, but some day I'll marry a banker's daughter, or fall heir to a ranch as big as old McCulloch County."

Before meeting us, Straw had confided to our foreman that he could assign no other plausible excuse for the stampede than that it was the work of cattle rustlers. He claimed to know the country along the Colorado, and unless it had changed recently, those hills to the westward harbored a good many of the worst rustlers in the State. He admitted it might have been wolves chasing the range cattle, but thought it had the earmarks of being done by human wolves. He maintained that

few herds had ever passed that river without loss of cattle, unless the rustlers were too busy elsewhere to give the passing herd their attention. Straw had ordered his herd to drop back down the trail about ten miles from their camp of the night previous, and about noon the two herds met on a branch of Brady Creek. By that time our herd had nearly three hundred head of the Ellison cattle, so we held it up and cut theirs out. Straw urged our foreman, whatever he did, not to make camp in the Colorado bottoms or anywhere near the river, if he did n't want a repetition of his experience. After starting our herd in the afternoon, about half a dozen of us turned back and lent a hand in counting Straw's herd, which proved to be over a hundred head short, and nearly half his outfit were still out hunting cattle. Acting on Straw's advice, we camped that night some five or six miles back from the river on the last divide. From the time the second guard went on until the third was relieved, we took the precaution of keeping a scout outriding from a half to three quarters of a mile distant from the herd, Flood and Honeyman serving in that capacity. Every precaution was taken to prevent a surprise; and in case anything did happen, our night horses tied to the wagon wheels stood ready saddled and bridled for any emergency. But the night passed without incident.

An hour or two after the herd had started the

rode up from the westward, and representing themselves as trail cutters, asked for our foreman. Flood met them, in his usual quiet manner, and after admitting that we had been troubled more or less with range cattle, assured our callers that if there was anything in the herd in the brands they represented, he would gladly hold it up and give them every opportunity to cut their cattle out. As he was anxious to cross the river before noon, he invited the visitors to stay for dinner, assuring them that before starting the herd in the afternoon, he would throw the cattle together for their inspection. Flood made himself very agreeable inquiring into cattle and range matters in general as well as the stage of water in the river ahead. The spokesman of the trail cutters met Flood's invitation to dinner with excuses about the pressing demands on his time, and urged, if it did not seriously interfere with our plans, that he be allowed to inspect the herd before crossing the river. His reasons seemed trivial and our foreman was not convinced.

"You see, gentlemen," he said, "in handling these southern cattle, we must take advantage of occasions. We have timed our morning's drive so as to reach the river during the warmest hour of the day, or as near noon as possible. You can hardly imagine what a difference there is, in fording this herd, between a cool, cloudy day and a clear hot one. You see the herd is strung out nearly a

mile in length now, and to hold them up and waste an hour or more for your inspection would seriously disturb our plans. And then our wagon and *remuda* have gone on with orders to noon at the first good camp beyond the river. I perfectly understand your reasons, and you equally understand mine; but I will send a man or two back to help you recross any cattle you may find in our herd. Now, if a couple of you gentlemen will ride around on the far side with me, and the others will ride up near the lead, we will trail the cattle across when we reach the river without cutting the herd into blocks."

Flood's affability, coupled with the fact that the lead cattle were nearly up to the river, won his point. Our visitors could only yield, and rode forward with our lead swing men to assist in forcing the lead cattle into the river. It was swift water, but otherwise an easy crossing, and we allowed the herd, after coming out on the farther side, to spread out and graze forward at its pleasure. The wagon and saddle stock were in sight about a mile ahead, and leaving two men on herd to drift the cattle in the right direction, the rest of us rode leisurely on to the wagon, where dinner was waiting. Flood treated our callers with marked courtesy during dinner, and casually inquired if any of their number had seen any cattle that day or the day previous in the Ellison road brand. They had not, they said, explaining that

their range lay on both sides of the Concho, and that during the trail season they kept all their cattle between that river and the main Colorado. Their work had kept them on their own range recently except when trail herds were passing and needed to be looked through for strays. It sounded as though our trail cutters could also use diplomacy on occasion.

When dinner was over and we had caught horses for the afternoon and were ready to mount, Floo asked our guests for their credentials as duly authorized trail cutters. They replied that they had none, but offered in explanation the statement that they were merely cutting in the interest of the immediate locality, which required no written authority.

Then the previous affability of our foreman turned to iron. "Well, men," said he, "if you have no authority to cut this trail, then you don't cut this herd. I must have inspection papers before I can move a brand out of the county in which it is bred, and I'll certainly let no other man, local or duly appointed, cut an animal out of this herd without written and certified authority. You know that without being told, or ought to. I respect the rights of every man posted on a trail to cut it. If you want to see my inspection papers, you have the right to demand them, and in turn I demand of you your credentials, showing who you work for and the list of brands you represent; otherwise no harm's done; nor do you cut any herd that I'

"Well," said one of the men, "I saw a couple of head in my own individual brand as we rode up the herd. I'd like to see the man who says that I have n't the right to claim my own brand, anywhere I find it."

"If there's anything in our herd in your individual brand," said Flood, "all you have to do is to give me the brand, and I'll cut it for you. What's your brand?"

"The 'Window Sash.'"

"Have any of you boys seen such a brand in our herd?" inquired Flood, turning to us as we all stood by our horses ready to start.

"I didn't recognize it by that name," replied Quince Forrest, who rode in the swing on the branded side of the cattle and belonged to the last guard, "but I remember seeing such a brand, though I would have given it a different name. Yes, come to think, I'm sure I saw it, and I'll tell you where: yesterday morning when I rode out to throw those drifting cattle away from our herd, I saw that brand among the Ellison cattle which had stampeded the night before. When Straw's outfit cut theirs out yesterday, they must have left the 'Window Sash' cattle with us; those were the range cattle which stampeded his herd. It looked to me a little blotched, but if I'd been called on to name it, I'd called it a thief's brand. If these gentlemen claim them, though, it'll only take a minute to cut them out."

"This outfit need n't get personal and fling out their insults," retorted the claimant of the "Window Sash" brand, "for I'll claim my own if there were a hundred of you. And you can depend that any animal I claim, I'll take, if I have to go back to the ranch and bring twenty men to help me do it."

"You won't need any help to get all that's coming to you," replied our foreman, as he mounted his horse. "Let's throw the herd together, boys, and cut these 'Window Sash' cattle out. We don't want any cattle in our herd that stampede on an open range at midnight; they must certainly be a terrible wild."

As we rode out together, our trail cutters dropped behind and kept a respectable distance from the herd while we threw the cattle together. When the herd had closed to the required compactness Flood called our trail cutters up and said, "Now men, each one of you can take one of my outfits with you and inspect this herd to your satisfaction. If you see anything there you claim, we'll cut it out for you, but don't attempt to cut anything yourselves."

We rode in by pairs, a man of ours with each stranger, and after riding leisurely through the herd for half an hour, cut out three head in the blotched brand called the "Window Sash." Before leaving the herd, one of the strangers laid claim to a red cow, but Fox Quarternight refused to cut the animal.

When the pair rode out the stranger accosted Flood. "I notice a cow of mine in there," said he, "not in your road brand, which I claim. Your man here refuses to cut her for me, so I appeal to you."

"What's her brand, Fox?" asked Flood.

"She's a 'Q' cow, but the colonel here thinks it's an 'O.' I happen to know the cow and the brand both; she came into the herd four hundred miles south of here while we were watering the herd in the Nueces River. The 'Q' is a little dim, but it's plenty plain to hold her for the present."

"If she's a 'Q' cow I have no claim on her," protested the stranger, "but if the brand is an 'O,' then I claim her as a stray from our range, and I don't care if she came into your herd when you were watering in the San Fernando River in Old Mexico, I'll claim her just the same. I'm going to ask you to throw her."

"I'll throw her for you," coolly replied Fox, "and bet you my saddle and six-shooter on the side that it is n't an 'O,' and even if it was, you and all the thieves on the Concho can't take her. I know a few of the simple principles of rustling myself. Do you want her thrown?"

"That's what I asked for."

"Throw her, then," said Flood, "and don't let's parley."

Fox rode back into the herd, and after some little delay located the cow and worked her out to the

edge of the cattle. Dropping his rope, he cut her out clear of the herd, and as she circled around in an endeavor to reënter, he rode close and made an easy cast of the rope about her horns. As he threw his horse back to check the cow, I rode to his assistance, my rope in hand, and as the cow turned her ends, I heeled her. A number of the outfit rode up and dismounted, and one of the boys taking her by the tail, we threw the animal as humanely as possible. In order to get at the brand, which was on the side, we turned the cow over, when Flood took out his knife and cut the hair away, leaving the brand easily traceable.

"What is she, Jim?" inquired Fox, as he sat on his horse holding the rope taut.

"I'll let this man who claims her answer the question," replied Flood, as the claimant critically examined the brand to his satisfaction.

"I claim her as an 'O' cow," said the stranger, facing Flood.

"Well, you claim more than you'll ever get," replied our foreman. "Turn her loose, boys."

The cow was freed and turned back into the herd, but the claimant tried to argue the matter with Flood, claiming the branding iron had simply slipped, giving it the appearance of a "Q" instead of an "O" as it was intended to be. Our foreman paid little attention to the stranger, but when his persistence became annoying checked his argument by saying, —

"My Christian friend, there's no use arguing this matter. You asked to have the cow thrown, and we threw her. You might as well try to tell me that the cow is white as to claim her in any other brand than a 'Q.' You may read brands as well as I do, but you're wasting time arguing against the facts. You'd better take your 'Window Sash' cattle and ride on, for you've cut all you're going to cut here to-day. But before you go, for fear I may never see you again, I'll take this occasion to say that I think you're common cow thieves."

By his straight talk, our foreman stood several inches higher in our estimation as we sat our horses, grinning at the discomfiture of the trail cutters, while a dozen six-shooters slouched languidly at our hips to give emphasis to his words.

"Before going, I'll take this occasion to say to you that you will see me again," replied the leader, riding up and confronting Flood. "You have n't got near enough men to bluff me. As to calling me a cow thief, that's altogether too common a name to offend any one; and from what I can gather, the name would n't miss you or your outfit over a thousand miles. Now in taking my leave, I want to tell you that you'll see me before another day passes, and what's more, I'll bring an outfit with me and we'll cut your herd clean to your road brand, if for no better reasons, just to learn you not to be so insolent"

After hanging up this threat, Flood said to him as he turned to ride away, "Well, now, my your friend, you 're bargaining for a whole lot of fun. I notice you carry a gun and quite naturally suppose you shoot a little as occasion requires. Suppose when you and your outfit come back, you come a-shooting, so we 'll know who you are; for I promise you there 's liable to be some powder burnt when you cut this herd."

Amid jeers of derision from our outfit, the trail cutters drove off their three lonely "Window Sash" cattle. We had gained the point we wanted, and now in case of any trouble, during inspection or night, we had the river behind us to catch our herd. We paid little attention to the threat of our disappointed callers, but several times Strawn's remarks as to the character of the residents of the hills to the westward recurred to my mind. I was young, but knew enough, instead of asking foolish questions, to keep mum, though my eyes and ears drank in everything. Before we had been on the trail over an hour, we met two men riding down the trail towards the river. Meeting us, they turned and rode along with our foreman, some distance apart from the herd, for nearly an hour, and curiosity ran freely among us boys around the herd as to who they might be. Finally Flood rode forward to the point men and gave the order to throw off the trail and make a short drive that afternoon. Then in company with the two strangers, he rode

forward to overtake our wagon, and we saw nothing more of him until we reached camp that evening. This much, however, our point man was able to get from our foreman: that the two men were members of a detachment of Rangers who had been sent as a result of information given by the first herd over the trail that year. This herd, which had passed some twenty days ahead of us, had met with a stampede below the river, and on reaching Abilene had reported the presence of rustlers preying on through herds at the crossing of the Colorado.

On reaching camp that evening with the herd, we found ten of the Rangers as our guests for the night. The detachment was under a corporal named Joe Hames, who had detailed the two men we had met during the afternoon to scout this crossing. Upon the information afforded by our foreman about the would-be trail cutters, these scouts, accompanied by Flood, had turned back to advise the Ranger squad, encamped in a secluded spot about ten miles northeast of the Colorado crossing. They had only arrived late the day before, and this was their first meeting with any trail herd to secure any definite information.

Hames at once assumed charge of the herd, Flood gladly rendering every assistance possible. We night herded as usual, but during the two middle guards, Hames sent out four of his Rangers to scout the immediate outlying country, though,

daybreak the Rangers threw their packs into our wagon and their loose stock into our *remuda*, and riding up the trail a mile or more, left us, keeping well out of sight. We were all hopeful now that the trail cutters of the day before would make good their word and return. In this hope we killed time for several hours that morning, grazing the cattle and holding the wagon in the rear. Sending the wagon ahead of the herd had been agreed on as the signal between our foreman and the Ranger corporal, at first sight of any posse behind us. We were beginning to despair of their coming, when a dust cloud appeared several miles back down the trail. We at once hurried the wagon and *remuda* ahead to warn the Rangers, and allowed the cattle to string out nearly a mile in length.

A fortunate rise in the trail gave us a glimpse of the cavalcade in our rear, which was entirely too large to be any portion of Straw's outfit; and shortly we were overtaken by our trail cutters of the day before, now increased to twenty-two mounted men. Flood was intentionally in the lead of the herd, and the entire outfit galloped forward to stop the cattle. When they had nearly reached the lead Flood turned back and met the rustlers.

"Well, I'm as good as my word," said the leader, "and I'm here to trim your herd as I promised you I would. Throw off and hold up your cattle, or I'll do it for you."

Several of our outfit rode up at this juncture

me to hear Flood's reply: "If you think you're equal to the occasion, hold them up yourself. If I had as big an outfit as you have, I would n't ask any man to help me. I want to watch a Colorado outfit work a herd,—I might learn something. My outfit will take a rest, or perhaps hold the cut or otherwise clerk for you. But be careful and don't claim anything that you are not certain is your own, for I reserve the right to look over your cut before you drive it away."

The rustlers rode in a body to the lead, and when they had thrown the herd off the trail, about half of them rode back and drifted forward the rear cattle. Flood called our outfit to one side and gave our instructions, the herd being entirely turned over to the rustlers. After they began cutting, we rode around and pretended to assist in holding the cut as the strays in our herd were being cut. When the red "Q" cow came out, Fox cut back, which nearly precipitated a row, for she promptly recut to the strays by the man who named her the day before. Not a man of us even cast a glance up the trail, or in the direction of the rustlers; but when the work was over, Flood proceeded with the leader of the rustlers over some five or six head of dim-branded cattle which actually belonged to our herd. But he was exultant and would listen to no protests, and attempted to drive away the cut, now numbering nearly fifty head.

In the parley which ensued, harsh words were passing, when one of our outfit blurted out in a feigned surprise, —

“Hello, who’s that, coming over there?”

A squad of men were riding leisurely through our abandoned herd, coming over to where the two outfits were disputing.

“What’s the trouble here, gents?” inquired Hames as he rode up.

“Who are you and what might be your business, may I ask?” inquired the leader of the rustlers.

“Personally I’m nobody, but officially I’m Corporal in Company B, Texas Rangers — well, there isn’t smiling Ed Winters, the biggest cattle thief ever born in Medina County. Why, I’ve papers for you; for altering the brands on a fifty head of ‘C’ cattle into a ‘G’ brand. Come here, dear, and give me that gun of yours. Come on, and no false moves or funny work or I’ll show the white out of your eye. Surround this lay-down-lads, and let’s examine them more closely.”

At this command, every man in our outfit whipped out his six-shooter, the Rangers leveled their revolvers on the rustlers, and in less than a minute time they were disarmed and as crestfallen a group of men as ever walked into a trap of their own making. Hames got out a “black book,” and after looking the crowd over concluded to hold the enclosure, as the descriptions of the “wanted” seemed to include most of them. Some of the rust-

tempted to explain their presence, but Hames decided to hold the entire party, "just to learn them to be more careful of their company the next time," as he put it.

The cut had drifted away into the herd again during the arrest, and about half our outfit took the cattle on to where the wagon camped for noon. McCann had anticipated an extra crowd for dinner and was prepared for the emergency. When dinner was over and the Rangers had packed and were ready to leave, Hames said to Flood, —

"Well, Flood, I'm powerful glad I met you and your outfit. This has been one of the biggest pound-ups for me in a long time. You don't know how proud I am over this bunch of beauties. Why, there's liable to be enough rewards out for this crowd to buy my girl a new pair of shoes. And say, when your wagon comes into Abilene, if I ain't there, just drive around to the sheriff's office and leave those captured guns. I'm sorry to load your wagon down that way, but I'm short on pack mules and it will be a great favor to me; besides, these fellows are not liable to need any guns for some little time. I like your company and your chuck, Flood, but you see how it is; the best of friends must part; and then I have an invitation to take dinner in Abilene by to-morrow noon, so I must be a-riding. Adios, everybody."

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE BRAZOS AND WICHITA

As we neared Buffalo Gap a few days later the deputy sheriff of Taylor County, who resided at the Gap, rode out and met us. He brought an urgent request from Hames to Flood to appear as a witness against the rustlers, who were to be given a preliminary trial at Abilene the following day. Much as he regretted to leave the herd for even a single night, our foreman finally consented to do so. To further his convenience we made a long evening drive, camping for the night well above Buffalo Gap, which at that time was little more than a landmark on the trail. The next day we made an easy drive and passed Abilene early in the afternoon, where Flood rejoined us, but refused any permission to go into town, with the exception of taking McCann with the wagon, which was a matter of necessity. It was probably for the best, for this cow town had the reputation of setting a pace that left the wayfarer purseless and breathless, to say nothing about headaches. Though our foreman had not reached those mature years in life when the pleasures and frivolities of dissipation no longer allure, yet it was but natural that he should wish

keep his men from the temptation of the cup of beer and the wiles of the siren. But when the wagon returned that evening, it was evident that our foreman was human, for with a box of cigars which were promised us were several bottles of Old Crow.

After crossing the Clear Fork of the Brazos a few days later, we entered a well-watered, open country, through which the herd made splendid progress. At Abilene, we were surprised to learn that our herd was the twentieth that had passed that point. The weather so far on our trip had been exceptionally good; only a few showers had fallen, and those during the daytime. But we were now entering a country in which rain was more frequent, and the swollen condition of several small streams which have their headwaters in the Staked Plains was an intimation to us of recent rains to the westward of our route. Before reaching the main Brazos, we passed two other herds of yearling cattle, and were warned of the impassable condition of that river for the past week. Nothing daunted, we made our usual drive; and when the herd camped that night, Flood, after scouting ahead to the river, returned with the word that the Brazos had been unfordable for over a week, the herds being waterbound.

As we were then nearly twenty miles south of the river, the next morning we threw off the trail

strike the Brazos a few miles above Round Timbuctoo ferry. Once the herd was started and their course for the day outlined to our point men by definite landmarks, Flood and Quince Forrest set out to locate the ferry and look up a crossing. Had it not been for our wagon, we would have kept on the trail, but as there was no ferry on the Brazos at the crossing of the western trail, it was a question either of waiting or of making this detour. Though all the grazing for several miles about the crossing was already taken by the waterbound herds, it was to crowd up and trespass on range already occupied would have been a violation of an unwritten law. Again, no herd took kindly to another attempt to pass them when in traveling condition the herds were on an equality. Our foreman had conceived the scheme of getting past these waterbound herds if possible, which would give us a clear field until the next large watercourse was reached.

Flood and Forrest returned during the noon hour, the former having found, by swimming, a passable ford near the mouth of Monday Creek, while the latter reported the ferry in "apple-pie order." Dinner, then, was dinner over than the wagon could wait for the ferry under Forrest as pilot, though we were to return to the herd once the ferry was sighted. The mouth of Monday Creek was over ten miles below the regular trail crossing the Brazos, and much nearer our noon camp than the regular one; but the wagon was compelled

make a direct elbow, first turning to the eastward, then doubling back after the river was crossed. We held the cattle off water during the day, so as to have them thirsty when they reached the river. Flood had swum it during the morning, and warned us to be prepared for fifty or sixty yards of swimming water in crossing. When within a mile, we held up the herd and changed horses, every man picking out one with a tested ability to swim. Those of us who were expected to take the water as the herd entered the river divested ourselves of boots and clothing, which we intrusted to riders in the rear. The approach to crossing was gradual, but the opposite bank was abrupt, with only a narrow passageway leading out from the channel. As the current was certain to carry the swimming cattle downstream, we must, to make due allowance, take the water nearly a hundred yards above the outlet on the other shore. All this was planned out in advance by our foreman, who now took the position of point man on the right hand or down the riverside; and with our saddle horses in the immediate lead, we breasted the angry Brazos.

The water was shallow as we entered, and we reached nearly the middle of the river before the loose saddle horses struck swimming water. Honeyman was on their lee, and with the cattle crowding in their rear, there was no alternative but to swim. A loose horse swims easily, how-

ever, and our *remuda* readily faced the current though it was swift enough to carry them below the passageway on the opposite side. By the time the lead cattle were adrift, and half a dozen of us were on their lower side, for the footing under the cutbank was narrow, and should the cattle become congested on landing, some were likely to drown. For a quarter of an hour it required cool heads to keep the trail of cattle moving into the water and the passageway clear on the opposite landing. While they were crossing, the herd represented a large letter "U," caused by the force of the current drifting the cattle downstream, or until a foothold was secured on the farther side. Those of us fortunate enough to have good swimming horses swam the river a dozen times, and then after the herd was safely over, swam back to get our clothing. It was a thrilling experience to us younger lads of the outfit, and rather attractive; but the elder and more experienced men always dreaded swimming rivers. Their reasons were made clear enough when, a fortnight later, we crossed Red River, where a newly made grave was pointed out to us, among others of men who had lost their lives while swimming cattle.

Once the bulk of the cattle were safely over, with no danger of congestion on the farther bank, the men were allowed to loiter along under the cutbank and drink to their hearts' content. Quite a number

er strayed above the passageway, and in order to put them out, Bob Blades, Moss Strayhorn, and I rode out through the outlet and up the river, where we found some of them in a passageway down a dry arroyo. The steers had found a soft, damp place in the bank, and were so busy horning the axxy, red mud, that they hardly noticed our approach until we were within a rod of them. We halted our horses and watched their antics. The kneeling cattle were cutting the bank viciously with their horns and matting their heads with the red mud, but on discovering our presence, they curved their tails and stampeded out as playfully as young lambs on a hillside.

"Can you sabe where the fun comes in to a steer, to get down on his knees in the mud and dirt, and to horn the bank and muss up his curls and enjoy it like that?" inquired Strayhorn of Blades and me.

"Because it's healthy and funny besides," replied Bob, giving me a cautious wink. "Did you never hear of people taking mud baths? You've seen dogs eat grass, have n't you? Well, it's something in the same order. Now, if I was a student of the nature of animals, like you are, I'd get off my horse and imagine I had horns, and scar and otherwise mangle that mud bank shamefully. I'll hold your horse if you want to try it—some of the secrets of the humor of cattle might be revealed to you."

The banter, though given in jest, was too much

for this member of a craft that can always depended on to do foolish things; and when rejoined the outfit, Strayhorn presented a sight sane man save a member of our tribe ever would have conceived of.

The herd had scattered over several thousand acres after leaving the river, grazing freely, and remained during the rest of the evening. For changed horses and set out down the river to find the wagon and pilot it in, for with the long distance that McCann had to cover, it was a question if it would reach us before dark. Flood selected a level ground and camp about a mile out from the river, and those of the outfit not on herd dragged an abundance of wood for the night, and built a roaring fire as a beacon to our absent commissary. Darkness soon settled over camp, and the prospect of a supperless night was confronting us; the fire guard had taken the herd, and yet there was no sign of the wagon. Several of us youngsters then mounted our night horses and rode down the river a mile or over in the hope of meeting McCann. We came to a steep bank, caused by the shifting of the first bottom of the river across to the north bank, rode up this bluff some little distance, dismounted, and fired several shots; then with our eyes to the earth patiently awaited a response. It did not come, and we rode back again. "Hell's fire and little fishes!" said Joe Stallings, as we clambered into our saddles to return, "it's not supper

breakfast that's troubling me, but will we get any dinner to-morrow? That's a more pregnant question."

It must have been after midnight when I was awakened by the braying of mules and the rattle of the wagon, to hear the voices of Forrest and McCann, mingled with the rattle of chains as they unharnessed, condemning to eternal perdition the broken country on the north side of the Brazos, between Round Timber ferry and the mouth of Monday Creek.

"I think that when the Almighty made this country on the north side of the Brazos," said McCann the next morning at breakfast, "the Creator must have grown careless or else made it out of odds and ends. There's just a hundred and one of these dry arroyos that you can't see until you are right onto them. They would n't bother a man on horseback, but with a loaded wagon it's different. And I'll promise you all right now that if Forrest had n't come out and piloted me in, you might have tightened up your belts for breakfast and drank out of cow tracks and smoked cigarettes for nourishment. Well, it'll do you good; this high living was liable to spoil some of you, but I notice that you are all on your feed this morning. The black strap? Honeyman, get that molasses jug out of the wagon — it sits right in front of the chuck box. It does me good to see this outfit's tastes once more going back to the good old staples

We made our usual early start, keeping well on from the river on a course almost due northward. The next river on our way was the Wichita, still several days' drive from the mouth of Mondak Creek. Flood's intention was to parallel the old trail until near the river, when, if its stage of water was not fordable, we would again seek a lower crossing in the hope of avoiding any waterbound herds on that watercourse. The second day out from the Brazos it rained heavily during the day and drizzled during the entire night. Not a hoof would bed down, requiring the guards to be doubled in two watches for the night. The next morning, as was usual when off the trail, Flood scouted in advance, and near the middle of the afternoon's drive we came into the old trail. The weather in the mean time had faired off, which revived life and spirit in the outfit, for in trail work there is nothing that depresses the spirits of men like falling weather. On coming into the trail, we noticed that no herds had passed since the rain began. Shortly afterward our rear guard was overtaken by a horseman who belonged to a mixed herd which was encamped some four or five miles below the point where we came into the old trail. He reported the Wichita as having been unfordable for the past week, but at that time falling; and said that if the rain of the past few days had not extended as far west as the Staked Plains, the river would be fordable in a day or two.

Before the stranger left us, Flood returned and confirmed this information, and reported further that there were two herds lying over at the Wichita Ford expecting to cross the following day. With this outlook, we grazed our herd up to within five miles of the river and camped for the night, and our visitor returned to his outfit with Flood's report of our expectation of crossing on the morrow. But with the fair weather and the prospects of an easy night, we encamped entirely too close to the rail, as we experienced to our sorrow. The grazing was good everywhere, the recent rains having washed away the dust, and we should have camped farther away. We were all sleepy that night, and no sooner was supper over than every mother's son of us was in his blankets. We slept so soundly that the guards were compelled to dismount when calling the relief, and shake the next guards on duty out of their slumber and see that they got up, for men would unconsciously answer in their sleep. The cattle were likewise tired, and slept as willingly as the men.

About midnight, however, Fox Quarternight dashed into camp, firing his six-shooter and yelling like a demon. We tumbled out of our blankets in a dazed condition to hear that one of the herds camped near the river had stampeded, the heavy stumbling of the running herd and the shooting of their outfit now being distinctly audible. We lost no time getting our horses, and in less than a min-

ute were riding for our cattle, which had already got up and were timidly listening to the approaching noise. Although we were a good quarter mile from the trail, before we could drift our herd to a point of safety, the stampeding cattle swept down the trail like a cyclone and our herd was absorbed into the maelstrom of the onrush like leaves in a whirlwind. It was then that our long-legged Mexican steers set us a pace that required a good horse to equal, for they easily took the lead, the other herd having run between three and four miles before striking us, and being already well winded. The other herd were Central Texas cattle, and numbered over thirty-five hundred, but in running capacity were never any match for ours.

Before they had run a mile past our camp, our outfit, bunched well together on the left point, made the first effort to throw them out and off the trail and try to turn them. But the waves of an angry ocean could as easily have been brought under subjection as our terrorized herd during this first mad dash. Once we turned a few hundred of the leaders, and about the time we thought success was in reach, another contingent of double the number had taken the lead ; then we had to abandon what few we had, and again ride to the front. When we reached the lead, there, within half a mile ahead, burned the camp-fire of the herd of mixed cattle which had moved up the trail that evening. They had had ample warning of impending trouble, just

as we had; and before the running cattle reached them about half a dozen of their outfit rode to our assistance, when we made another effort to turn or hold the herds from mixing. None of the outfit of the first herd had kept in the lead with us, their horses fagging, and when the foreman of this mixed herd met us, not knowing that we were as innocent of the trouble as himself, he made some slighting remarks about our outfit and cattle. But it was no time to be sensitive, and with his outfit to help we threw our whole weight against the left point a second time, but only turned a few hundred; and before we could get into the lead again their camp-fire had been passed and their herd of over three thousand cattle more were in the run. As cows and calves predominated in this mixed herd, our own southerners were still leaders in the stampede.

It is questionable if we would have turned this stampede before daybreak, had not the nature of the country come to our assistance. Something over two miles below the camp of the last herd was a deep creek, the banks of which were steep and the passages few and narrow. Here we succeeded in turning the leaders, and about half the outfit of the mixed herd remained, guarding the crossing and turning the lagging cattle in the run as they came up. With the leaders once turned and no chance for the others to take a new lead, we had the entire run of cattle turned back within an hour and safely under control. The first outfit joined us

during the interim, and when day broke we had over forty men drifting about ten thousand cattle back up the trail. The different outfits were unfortunately at loggerheads, no one being willing to assume any blame. Flood hunted up the foreman of the mixed herd and demanded an apology for his remarks on our abrupt meeting with him the night before; and while it was granted, it was plain that it was begrudged. The first herd disclaimed all responsibility, holding that the stampede was due to an unavoidable accident, their cattle having grown restless during their enforced lay-over. The indifferent attitude of their foreman, whose name was Wilson, won the friendly regard of our outfit, and before the wagon of the mixed cattle was reached, there was a compact, at least tacit, between their outfit and ours. Our foreman was not blameless, for had we taken the usual precaution and camped at least a mile off the trail which was our custom when in close proximity to other herds, we might and probably would have missed this mix-up, for our herd was inclined to be very tractable. Flood, with all his experience, well knew that if stampeded cattle ever got into a known trail, they were certain to turn back over their course; and we were now paying the fiddler for lack of proper precaution.

Within an hour after daybreak, and before the cattle had reached the camp of the mixed herd, our saddle horses were sighted coming over a slight

divide about two miles up the trail, and a minute later McCann's mules hove in sight, bringing up the rear. They had made a start with the first dawn, rightly reasoning, as there was no time to leave orders on our departure, that it was advisable for Mahomet to go to the mountain. Flood complimented our cook and horse wrangler on their foresight, for the wagon was our base of sustenance; and there was little loss of time before Barney McCann was calling us to a hastily prepared breakfast. Flood asked Wilson to bring his outfit to our wagon for breakfast, and as fast as they were relieved from herd, they also did ample justice to McCann's cooking. During breakfast, I remember Wilson explaining to Flood what he believed was the cause of the stampede. It seems that there were a few remaining buffalo ranging north of the Wichita, and at night when they came into the river to drink they had scented the cattle on the south side. The bellowing of buffalo bulls had been distinctly heard by his men on night herd for several nights past. The foreman stated it as his belief that a number of bulls had swum the river and had by stealth approached near the sleeping cattle, — then, on discovering the presence of the riders, had themselves stampeded, throwing his herd into a panic.

We had got a change of mounts during the breakfast hour, and when all was ready Flood and Wilson rode over to the wagon of the mixed herd

the two outfits following, when Flood inquired their foreman, —

“Have you any suggestions to make in the cutting of these herds?”

“No suggestions,” was the reply, “but I intend to cut mine first and cut them northward on the trail.”

“You intend to cut them northward, you mean, provided there are no objections, which I’m positive there will be,” said Flood. “It takes some little time to size a man up, and the more I see of you during our brief acquaintance, the more I think there’s two or three things that you might learn to your advantage. I’ll not enumerate them now, but when these herds are separated, if you insist, it will cost you nothing but the asking of my opinion of you. This much you can depend on when the cutting’s over, you’ll occupy the same position on the trail that you did before this accident happened. Wilson, here, has nothing but jaded horses, and his outfit will hold the herd while yours and mine cut their cattle. And instead of your cutting north, you can either cut south where you belong on the trail or sulk in your camp, your own will and pleasure to govern. But if you are a cowman, willing to do your part, you’ll have your outfit ready to work by the time we throw the cattle together.”

Not waiting for any reply, Flood turned away, and the double outfit circled around the grazing

herd and began throwing the sea of cattle into a compact body ready to work. Rod Wheat and Ash Borrowstone were detailed to hold our cut, and the remainder of us, including Honeyman, entered the herd and began cutting. Shortly after we had commenced the work, the mixed outfit, finding themselves in a lonesome minority, joined us and began cutting out their cattle to the westward. When we had worked about half an hour, Flood called us out, and with the larger portion of Wilson's men, we rode over and drifted the mixed cut around to the southward, where they belonged. The mixed outfit pretended they meant no harm, and were politely informed that if they were sincere, they could show it more plainly. For nearly three hours we sent a steady stream of cattle out of the main herd into our cut, while our horses dripped with sweat. With our advantage in the start, as well as that of having the smallest herd, we finished our work first. While the mixed outfit were finishing their cutting, we changed mounts, and then were ready to work the separated herds. Wilson took about half his outfit, and after giving our herd a trimming, during which he recut about twenty, the mixed outfit were given a similar chance, and found about half a dozen of their brand. These cattle of Wilson's and the other herd amongst ours were not to be wondered at, for we cut by a liberal rule. Often we would find a number of ours on the outside of the main herd.

when two men would cut the squad in a bunch and if there was a wrong brand amongst them, it was no matter, — we knew our herd would have to be retrimmed anyhow, and the other outfits might be disappointed if they found none of their cattle amongst ours.

The mixed outfit were yet working our herd when Wilson's wagon and saddle horses arrived and while they were changing mounts, we cut the mixed herd of our brand and picked up a number of strays which we had been nursing along, though when we first entered the main herd, strays had received our attention, being well known to us by ranch brands as well as flesh marks. In gathering up this very natural flotsam of the trail, we cut nothing but what our herd had absorbed in its travels showing due regard to a similar right of the other herds. Our work was finished first, and after Wilson had recut the mixed herd, we gave his herd one more looking over in a farewell parting. Flood asked him if he wanted the lead, but Wilson waived his right in his open, frank manner, saying, "If I had as long-legged cattle as you have, I would not ask no man for the privilege of passing. Why, you ought to out-travel horses. I'm glad to have meet you and your outfit, personally, but regret the incident which has given you so much trouble. As I don't expect to go farther than Dodge or Ogallala at the most, you are more than welcome to the lead. And if you or any of these rascals in your outfit are

er in Coryell County, hunt up Frank Wilson of the Block Bar Ranch, and I'll promise you a drink of milk or something stronger if possible."

We crossed the Wichita late that afternoon, there being not over fifty feet of swimming water for the cattle. Our wagon gave us the only trouble, for the load could not well be lightened, and it was an imperative necessity to cross it the same day. Once the cattle were safely over and a few men left to haze them forward, the remainder of the outfit collected all the ropes and went back after the wagon. As mules are always unreliable in the water, Flood concluded to swim them loose. We lashed the wagon box securely to the gearing with ropes, arranged our bedding in the wagon where it could be on top, and ran the wagon by hand into the water as far as we dared without flooding the wagon box. Two men, with guy ropes fore and aft, were then left to swim with the wagon in order to keep it from toppling over, while the remainder of the outfit recrossed to the farther side of the swimming channel, and fastened our lariats to two long ropes from the end of the tongue. We took a wrap on the pommels of our saddles with the loose end, and when the word was given our eight horses furnished abundant motive power, and the wagon floated across, landing high and dry amid the shoutings of the outfit.

CHAPTER IX

DOAN'S CROSSING

IT was a nice open country between the Wichita and Pease rivers. On reaching the latter, we found an easy stage of water for crossing, though there was every evidence that the river had been on a recent rise, the débris of a late freshet littering the cutbank, while high-water mark could be easily noticed on the trees along the river bottom. Summer had advanced until the June freshets were to be expected, and for the next month we should be fortunate if our advance was not checked by floods and falling weather. The fortunate stage of the Pease encouraged us, however, to hope that possibly Red River, two days' drive ahead, would be fordable. The day on which we expected to reach it, Flood sent out early to look up the ford which had then been in use but a few years, and which in later days was known as Doan's Crossing on Red River. Our forerunner returned before noon and reported a favorable stage of water for the herd, and a new ferry that had been established for wagons. With this good news, we were determined to put that river behind us in as few hours as possible, for it was a common occurrence that a river which was fordable at night

was the reverse by daybreak. McCann was sent ahead with the wagon, but we held the saddle horses with us to serve as leaders in taking the water at the ford.

The cattle were strung out in trailing manner nearly a mile, and on reaching the river near the middle of the afternoon, we took the water without a halt or even a change of horses. This boundary river on the northern border of Texas was a terror to trail drovers, but on our reaching it, it had shallowed down, the flow of water following several small channels. One of these was swimming, with shallow bars intervening between the channels. But the majestic grandeur of the river was apparent on every hand, — with its red, bluff banks, the sediment of its red waters marking the timber along its course, while the driftwood, lodged in trees and high on the banks, indicated what might be expected when she became sportive or angry. That she was merciless was evident, for although this crossing had been in use only a year or two when we forded, yet five graves, one of which was less than ten days made, attested her disregard for human life. It can safely be asserted that at this and lower trail crossings on Red River, the lives of more trail men were lost by drowning than on all other rivers together. Just as we were nearing the river, an unknown horseman from the south overtook our herd. It was evident that he belonged to some through herd and was looking out

the crossing. He made himself useful by lending a hand while our herd was fording, and in a brief conversation with Flood, informed him that he was one of the hands with a "Running W" herd, gave the name of Bill Mann as their foreman, the number of cattle they were driving, and reported the herd as due to reach the river the next morning. He wasted little time with us, but recrossed the river, returning to his herd, while we grazed out four or five miles and camped for the night.

I shall never forget the impression left in my mind of that first morning after we crossed Red River into the Indian lands. The country was as primitive as in the first day of its creation. The trail led up a divide between the Salt and North forks of Red River. To the eastward of the latter stream lay the reservation of the Apaches, Kiowas and Comanches, the latter having been a terror to the inhabitants of western Texas. They were a warlike tribe, as the records of the Texas Rangers and government troops will verify, but their last effective dressing down was given them in a fight at Adobe Walls by a party of buffalo hunters whom they hoped to surprise. As we wormed our way up this narrow divide, there was revealed to us a panorama of green-swarded plain and timber-fringed watercourse, with not a visible evidence that it had ever been invaded by civilized man, save cattlemen with their herds. Antelope came up in bands and

gratified their curiosity as to who these invaders might be, while old solitary buffalo bulls turned tail at our approach and lumbered away to points of safety. Very few herds had ever passed over this route, but buffalo trails leading downstream, deep worn by generations of travel, were to be seen by hundreds on every hand. We were not there for a change of scenery or for our health, so we may have overlooked some of the beauties of the landscape. But we had a keen eye for the things of our craft. We could see almost back to the river, and several times that morning noticed clouds of dust on the horizon. Flood noticed them first. After some little time the dust clouds arose clear and distinct, and we were satisfied that the "Running W" herd had forded and were behind us, not more than ten or twelve miles away.

At dinner that noon, Flood said he had a notion to go back and pay Mann a visit. "Why, I've not seen 'Little-foot' Bill Mann," said our foreman, as he helped himself to a third piece of "fried chicken" (bacon), "since we separated two years ago up at Ogalalla on the Platte. I'd just like the best in the world to drop back and sleep in his blankets one night and complain of his chuck. Then I'd like to tell him how we had passed them, starting ten days' drive farther south. He must have been amongst those herds laying over on the Brazos."

"Why don't you go, then?" said Fox Quarter-

night. "Half the outfit could hold the cattle now with the grass and water we're in at present."

"I'll go you one for luck," said our foreman. "Wrangler, rustle in your horses the minute you're through eating. I'm going visiting."

We all knew what horse he would ride, and when he dropped his rope on "Alazanito," he had not only picked his own mount of twelve, but the top horse of the entire *remuda*,—a chestnut sorrel, fifteen hands and an inch in height, that drew his first breath on the prairies of Texas. No man who saw him once could ever forget him. Now, when the trail is a lost occupation, and reverie and reminiscence carry the mind back to that day, there are friends and faces that may be forgotten, but there are horses that never will be. There were emergencies in which the horse was everything, his rider merely the accessory. But together, man and horse they were the force that made it possible to move the millions of cattle which passed up and over the various trails of the West.

When we had caught our horses for the afternoon and Flood had saddled and was ready to start, he said to us, "You fellows just mosey along up the trail. I'll not be gone long, but when I get back I shall expect to find everything running smooth. An outfit that can't run itself without a boss ought to stay at home and do the milking. So long, fellows!"

The country was well watered, and when we

rounded the cattle into the bed ground that night, they were actually suffering from stomachs gorged with grass and water. They went down and to sleep like tired children ; one man could have held them that night. We all felt good, and McCann got up an extra spread for supper. We even had dried apples for dessert. McCann had talked the storekeeper at Doan's, where we got our last supplies, out of some extras as a *pelon*. Among them was a can of jam. He sprung this on us as a surprise. Bob Blades toyed with the empty can in mingled admiration and disgust over a picture on the paper label. It was a supper scene, every figure wearing full dress. "Now, that's General Grant," said he, pointing with his finger, "and this is Tom Ochiltree. I can't quite make out this other duck, but I reckon he's some big auger — a senator or governor, maybe. Them old girls have got their gall with them. That style of dress is what you call *lo* and *behold*. The whole *passel* ought to be ashamed. And they seem to be enjoying themselves, too."

Though it was a lovely summer night, we had a fire, and supper over, the conversation ranged wide and free. As the wagon on the trail is home, naturally the fire is the hearthstone, so we gathered and lounged around it.

"The only way to enjoy such a fine night as this," remarked Ash, "is to sit up smoking until you fall asleep with your boots on. Between too

much sleep and just enough, there's a happy medium which suits me."

"Officer," inquired Wyatt Roundtree, trailing into the conversation very innocently, "why is that people who live up among those Yankees always say 'be' the remainder of their lives?"

"What's the matter with the word?" countered Officer.

"Oh, nothing, I reckon, only it sounds a little odd, and there's a tale to it."

"A story, you mean," said Officer, reprovingly.

"Well, I'll tell it to you," said Roundtree, "and then you can call it to suit yourself. It was out in New Mexico where this happened. There was a fellow drifted into the ranch where I was working, dead broke. To make matters worse, he could do nothing; he would n't fit anywhere. Still, he was a nice fellow and we all liked him. Must have had a good education, for he had good letters from people up North. He had worked in stores and had once clerked in a bank, at least the letters said so. Well, we put up a job to get him a place in a little town out on the railroad. You all know how clannish Kentuckians are. Let two meet who never saw each other before, and inside of half an hour they'll be chewing tobacco from the same plug and trying to loan each other money."

"That's just like them," interposed Fox Quarternight.

"Well, there was an old man lived in this town

who was the genuine blend of bluegrass and Bourbon. If another Kentuckian came within twenty miles of him, and he found it out, he 'd hunt him up and they 'd hold a two-handed reunion. We put up the job that this young man should play that he was a Kentuckian, hoping that the old man would take him to his bosom and give him something to do. So we took him into town one day, coached and fully posted how to act and play his part. We met the old man in front of his place of business, and, after the usual comment on the news over our way, weather, and other small talk, we were on the point of passing on, when one of our own crowd turned back and inquired, 'Uncle Henry, have you met the young Kentuckian who's in the country?'

" 'No,' said the old man, brightening with interest, 'who is he and where is he?'

" 'He's in town somewhere,' volunteered one of the boys. We pretended to survey the street from where we stood, when one of the boys blurted out, 'Yonder he stands now. That fellow in front of the drug store over there, with the hard-boiled hat on.'

"The old man started for him, angling across the street, in disregard of sidewalks. We watched the meeting, thinking it was working all right. We were mistaken. We saw them shake hands, when the old man turned and walked away very haughtily. Something had gone wrong. He took

the sidewalk on his return, and when he came near enough to us, we could see that he was angry and on the prod. When he came near enough to speak he said, 'You think you're smart, don't you? He's a Kentuckian, is he? Hell's full of such Kentuckians!' And as he passed beyond hearing he was muttering imprecations on us. The young fellow joined us a minute later with the question 'What kind of a crank is that you ran me up against?'

"'He's as nice a man as there is in this country,' said one of the crowd. 'What did you say to him?'

"'Nothing; he came up to me, extended his hand, saying, "My young friend, I understand that you're from Kentucky." "I be, sir," I replied, when he looked me in the eye and said "You're a G— d— liar," and turned and walked away. Why, he must have wanted to insult me.' And then we all knew why our little scheme had failed. There was food and raiment in it for him, but he would use that little word 'be.'"

"Did any of you notice my saddle horse lie down just after we crossed this last creek this afternoon?" inquired Rod Wheat.

"No; what made him lie down?" asked several of the boys.

"Oh, he just found a gopher hole and stuck his forefeet into it one at a time, and then tried to pull them both out at once, and when he could n't

do it, he simply shut his eyes like a dying sheep and lay down."

"Then you've seen sheep die," said the horse wrangler.

"Of course I have; a sheep can die any time he makes up his mind to by simply shutting both eyes — then he's a goner."

Quince Forrest, who had brought in his horse to go out with the second watch, he and Bob Blades having taken advantage of the foreman's absence to change places on guard for the night, had been listening to the latter part of Wyatt's yarn very attentively. We all hoped that he would mount and ride out to the herd, for though he was a good story-teller and meaty with personal experiences, where he thought they would pass muster he was inclined to overcolor his statements. We usually gave him respectful attention, but were frequently compelled to regard him as a cheerful, harmless liar. So when he showed no disposition to go, we knew we were in for one from him.

"When I was boss bull-whacker," he began, "for a big army sutler at Fort Concho, I used to make two round trips a month with my train. It was a hundred miles to wagon from the freight point where we got our supplies. I had ten teams, six and seven yoke to the team, and trail wagons to each. I was furnished a night herder and a cook, saddle horses for both night herder and myself. You hear me it was a slam up fine layout. We

could handle three or four tons to the team, and with the whole train we could chamber two car loads of anything. One day we were nearing the fort with a mixed cargo of freight, when a messenger came out and met us with an order from the sutler. He wanted us to make the fort that night and unload. The mail buckboard had reported us to the sutler as camped out back on a little creek about ten miles. We were always entitled to a day to unload and drive back to camp, which gave us good grass for the oxen, but under the orders the whips popped merrily that afternoon, and when they all got well strung out, I rode in ahead, to see what was up. Well, it seems that four companies of infantry from Fort McKavett, which were out for field practice, were going to be brought into this post to be paid three months' wages. This, with the troops stationed at Concho, would turn loose quite a wad of money. The sutler called me into his office when I reached the fort, and when he had produced a black bottle used for cutting the alkali in your drinking water, he said, 'Jack,' — he called me Jack; my full name is John Quincy Forrest, — 'Jack, can you make the round trip, and bring in two cars of bottled beer that will be on the track waiting for you, and get back by pay day, the 10th?'

"I figured the time in my mind; it was twelve days.

"'There's five extra in it for each man for the

rip, and I'll make it right with you,' he added, as he noticed my hesitation, though I was only making a mental calculation.

" 'Why, certainly, Captain,' I said. 'What's that fable about the jack rabbit and the land tarapin?' He did n't know and I did n't either, so I said to illustrate the point: 'Put your freight on a bull train, and it always goes through on time. A race horse can't beat an ox on a hundred miles and repeat to a freight wagon.' Well, we unloaded before night, and it was pitch dark before we made camp. I explained the situation to the men. We planned to go in empty in five days, which would give us seven to come back loaded. We made every camp on time like clockwork. The fifth morning we were anxious to get a daybreak start, so we could load at night. The night herder had his orders to bring in the oxen the first sign of day, and I called the cook an hour before light. When the oxen were brought in, the men were up and ready to go to yoking. But the nigh wheeler in Joe Jenk's team, a big brindle, muley ox, a regular pet steer, was missing. I saw him myself, Joe saw him, and the night herder swore he came in with the rest. Well, we looked high and low for that Mr. Ox, but he had vanished. While the men were eating their breakfast, I got on my horse and the night herder and I scoured and circled that country for miles around, but no ox. The country was so bare and level that a jack rabbit

needed to carry a fly for shade. I was worried for we needed every ox and every moment of time. I ordered Joe to tie his mate behind the trail wagon and pull out one ox shy.

"Well, fellows, that thing worried me powerful. Half the teamsters, good, honest, truthful men as ever popped a whip, swore they saw that ox when they came in. Well, it served a strong argument that a man can be positive and yet be mistaken. We nooned ten miles from our night camp that day. Jerry Wilkens happened to mention it at dinner that he believed his trail needed greasing. 'Why,' said Jerry, 'you'd think that I was loaded the way my team kept their chains taut.' I noticed Joe get up from dinner before he had finished, as if an idea had struck him. He went over and opened the sheet in Jerry's trail wagon, and a smile spread over his countenance. 'Come here, fellows,' was all he said.

"We ran over to the wagon and there" —

The boys turned their backs with indistinct mutterings of disgust.

"You all don't need to believe this if you don't want to, but there was the missing ox, coiled up and sleeping like a bear in the wagon. He even had Jerry's roll of bedding for a pillow. You see, the wagon sheet was open in front, and he had hopped up on the trail tongue and crept in there to steal a ride. Joe climbed into the wagon, and gave him a few swift kicks in the short ribs, where

opened his eyes, yawned, got up, and jumped out."

Bull was rolling a cigarette before starting, while Fox's night horse was hard to bridle, which hindered them. With this slight delay, Forrest turned his horse back and continued: "That same morn'g on the next trip, one night when we had the wagons parked into a corral, got away from the herd, tip-toed over the men's beds in the gate, stood on his hind legs long enough to eat four fifty-pound sacks of flour out of the rear end of a wagon, got down on his side, and wormed his way under the wagon back into the herd, without being detected or waking a man."

As they rode away to relieve the first guard, McCann said, "Is n't he a muzzle-loading daisy? If I loved a liar I'd hug that man to death."

The absence of our foreman made no difference. We all knew our places on guard. Experience told us there would be no trouble that night. After Wyatt Roundtree and Moss Strayhorn had made down their bed and got into it, Wyatt remarked, —

"Did you ever notice, old sidey, how hard this ground is?"

"Oh, yes," said Moss, as he turned over, hunting for a soft spot, "it is hard, but we'll forget all that when this trip ends. Brother, dear, just think of those long slings with red cherries floating around in them that we'll be drinking, and picture

us smoking cigars in a blaze. That thought alone ought to make a hard bed both soft and warm. Then to think we'll ride all the way home on cars."

McCann banked his fire, and the first guard Wheat, Stallings, and Borrowstone, rode in front of the herd, all singing an old chorus that had been composed, with little regard for music or sense, about a hotel where they had stopped the year before : —

"Sure it's one cent for coffee and two cents for bread,
Three for a steak and five for a bed,
Sea breeze from the gutter wafts a salt water smell,
To the festive cowboy in the Southwestern hotel."

CHAPTER X

"NO MAN'S LAND"

FLOOD overtook us the next morning, and as a number of us gathered round him to hear the news, told us of a letter that Mann had got at Doan's, stating that the first herd to pass Camp Supply had been harassed by Indians. The "Running W" people, Mann's employers, had a representative at Dodge, who was authority for the statement. Flood had read the letter, which intimated that an appeal would be made to the government to send troops from either Camp Supply or Fort Sill to give trail herds a safe escort in passing the western border of this Indian reservation. The letter, therefore, admonished Mann, if he thought the Indians would give any trouble, to go up the south side of Red River, as far as the Pan-handle of Texas, and then turn north to the government trail at Fort Elliot.

"I told Mann," said our foreman, "that before I'd take one step backward, or go off on a wild goose chase through that Pan-handle country, I'd go back home and start over next year on the Chisholm trail. It's the easiest thing in the world for some big auger to sit in a hotel somewhere and

direct the management of a herd. I don't look for no soldiers to furnish an escort; it would take the government six months to get a move on her, even in an emergency. I left Billy Mann in a quandary; he does n't know what to do. That big auger Dodge is troubling him, for if he don't act on his advice, and loses cattle as the result — well, he'll never boss any more herds for King and Kennedy. So, boys, if we're ever to see the Blackfoot Agency, there's but one course for us to take, and that's straight ahead. As old Oliver Loving, the first Texas cowman that ever drove a herd, used to say, 'Never borrow trouble, or cross a river before you reach it.' So when the cattle are through grazing, let them hit the trail north. It's entirely too late for us to veer away from any Indians."

We were following the regular trail, which had been slightly used for a year or two, though none of our outfit had ever been over it, when late on the third afternoon, about forty miles out from Doan's, about a hundred mounted bucks and squaws sighted our herd and crossed the North Fork from their encampment. They did not ride direct to the herd but came into the trail nearly a mile above the cattle, so it was some little time from our first sighting them before we met. We did not check the herd or turn out of the trail, but when the lead came within a few hundred yards of the Indians, one buck, evidently the chief of the band, rode forward a few rods and held up one hand, as if

commanding a halt. At the sight of this gaudily bedecked apparition, the cattle turned out of the trail, and Flood and I rode up to the chief, extending our hands in friendly greeting. The chief could not speak a word of English, but made signs with his hands; when I turned loose on him in Spanish, however, he instantly turned his horse and signed back to his band. Two young bucks rode forward and greeted Flood and myself in good Spanish.

On thus opening up an intelligible conversation, called Fox Quarternight, who spoke Spanish, and he rode up from his position of third man in theaving and joined in the council. The two young Indians through whom we carried on the conversation were Apaches, no doubt renegades of that tribe, and while we understood each other in Spanish, they spoke in a heavy guttural peculiar to the Indian. Flood opened the powwow by demanding to know the meaning of this visit. When the question had been properly interpreted to the chief, the latter dropped his blanket from his shoulders and dismounted from his horse. He was a fine specimen of the Plains Indian, fully six feet in height, perfectly proportioned, and in years well past middle life. He looked every inch a chief, and was a natural born orator. There was a certain easy grace to his gestures, only to be seen in people who use the sign language, and often when he was speaking to the Apache interpreters I could

anticipate his requests before they were translated to us, although I did not know a word of Comanche.

Before the powwow had progressed far it was evident that begging was its object. In his preamble, the chief laid claim to all the country in sight as the hunting grounds of the Comanche tribe, an intimation that we were intruders. He spoke of the great slaughter of the buffalo by the white hunters, and the consequent hunger and poverty amongst his people. He dwelt on the fact that he had ever counseled peace with the whites, until now his band numbered but a few squaws and papooses, the younger men having deserted him for other chiefs of the tribe who advocated war on the pale faces. When he had fully stated his position, he offered to allow us to pass through his country in consideration of ten beeves. On receiving this proposition, all of us dismounted, including the Apaches, the latter seating themselves in their ordinary fashion, while we whites lounged on the ground in truly American laziness, rolling cigarettes. In dealing with people who know not the value of time, the civilized man is taken at a disadvantage, and unless he can show an equal composure in wasting time, results will be against him. Flood had many years of experience in dealing with Mexicans in the land of *mañana*, where all maxims regarding the value of time are religiously discarded. So in dealing with this Indian chief he showed no desire

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

fasten matters, and carefully avoided all reference to the demand for beeves.

His first question, instead, was to know the distance to Fort Sill and Fort Elliot. The next was how many days it would take for cavalry to reach him. He then had us narrate the fact that when the first herd of cattle passed through the country less than a month before, some bad Indians had shown a very unfriendly spirit. They had taken many of the cattle and had killed and eaten them, and now the great white man's chief at Washington was very much displeased. If another single ox were taken and killed by bad Indians, he would send his soldiers from the forts to protect the cattle, even though their owners drove the herds through the reservation of the Indians—over the grass where their ponies grazed. He had us inform the chief that our entire herd was intended by the great white man's chief at Washington as a present to the Blackfeet Indians who lived in Montana, because they were good Indians, and welcomed priests and teachers amongst them to teach them the ways of the white man. At our foreman's request we then informed the chief that he was under no obligation to give him even a single beef for any privilege of passing through his country, but as the squaws and little papooses were hungry, he would give him two beeves.

The old chief seemed not the least disconcerted, but begged for five beeves, as many of the squaws

were in the encampment across the North Fork those present being not quite half of his village. It was now getting late in the day and the band seemed to be getting tired of the parleying, a number of squaws having already set out on their return to the village. After some further talk, Flood agreed to add another beef, on condition they be taken to the encampment before being killed. This was accepted, and at once the entire band set out a chattering in view of the coming feast. The cattle had in the mean time grazed off nearly a mile from the outfit, however, holding them under a close herd during the powwowing. All the bucks of the band, numbering about forty, now joined us and we rode away to the herd. I noticed, by the way, that quite a number of the younger braves had arms, and no doubt they would have made a display of force had Flood's diplomacy been of more warlike character. While drifting the herd back to the trail we cut out a big lame steer and two stray cows for the Indians, who now left us and followed the beeves which were being driven to their village.

Flood had instructed Quarternight and me to invite the two Apaches to our camp for the night on the promise of sugar, coffee, and tobacco. They consulted with the old chief, and gaining his consent came with us. We extended the hospitality of our wagon to our guests, and when supper was over, promised them an extra beef if they would

give us particulars of the trail until it crossed the North Fork, after that river turned west towards the Pan-handle. It was evident that they were familiar with the country, for one of them accepted our offer, and with his finger sketched a rude map on the ground where there had formerly been a camp-fire. He outlined the two rivers between which we were then encamped, and traced the trail until it crossed the North Fork or beyond the Indian reservation. We discussed the outline of the trail in detail for an hour, asking hundreds of unimportant questions, but occasionally getting in a leading one, always resulting in the information wanted. We learned that the big summer encampment of the Comanches and Kiowas was one day's ride for a pony or two days' with cattle up the trail, at the point where the divide between Salt and North Fork narrows to about ten miles in width. We leeched out of them very cautiously the information that the encampment was a large one, and that all herds this year had given up cattle, some as many as twenty-five head.

Having secured the information we wanted, Flood gave to each Apache a package of Arbuckle coffee, a small sack of sugar, and both smoking and chewing tobacco. Quarternight informed them that as the cattle were bedded for the night, they had better remain until morning, when he would pick them out a nice fat beef. On their consenting, Fox stripped the wagon sheet off the wagon and made them a

good bed, in which, with their body blankets, they were as comfortable as any of us. Neither of them was armed, so we felt no fear of them, and after they had lain down on their couch, Flood called Quarternight and me, and we strolled out into the darkness and reviewed the information. We agreed that the topography of the country they had given was most likely correct, because we could verify much of it by maps in our possession. Another thing on which we agreed was, that there was some means of communication between this small and seemingly peaceable band and the main encampment of the tribe; and that more than likely our approach would be known in the large encampment before sunrise. In spite of the good opinion we entertained of our guests, we were also satisfied they had lied to us when they denied they had been in the large camp since the trail herds began to pass. This was the last question we had asked and the artful manner in which they had parried it showed our guests to be no mean diplomats themselves.

Our camp was astir by daybreak, and after breakfast, as we were catching our mounts for the day, one of the Apaches offered to take a certain pint horse in our *remuda* in lieu of the promised beef, but Flood declined the offer. On overtaking the herd after breakfast, Quarternight cut out a fat two year old stray heifer, and he and I assisted our guests to drive their beef several miles toward

their village. Finally bidding them farewell, we returned to the herd, when the outfit informed us that Flood and The Rebel had ridden on ahead to look out a crossing on the Salt Fork. From this move it was evident that if a passable ford could be found, our foreman intended to abandon the established route and avoid the big Indian encampment.

On the return of Priest and Flood about noon, they reported having found an easy ford of the Salt Fork, which, from the indications of their old trails entering from every quarter at this crossing, must have been used by buffalo for generations. After dinner we put our wagon in the lead, and following close at hand with the cattle, turned off the trail about a mile above our noon camp and struck to the westward for the crossing. This we reached and crossed early that evening, camping out nearly five miles to the west of the river. Rain was always to be dreaded in trail work, and when bedding down the herd that night, we had one of the heaviest downpours which we had experienced since leaving the Rio Grande. It lasted several hours, but we took it uncomplainingly, for this fortunate drenching had obliterated every trace left by our wagon and herd since abandoning the trail, as well as the sign left at the old buffalo crossing on the Salt Fork. The rain ceased about ten o'clock, when the cattle bedded down easily, and the second guard took them for their watch. Wood was too scarce to afford a fire, and while our slickers had partially

protected us from the rain, many of us went to bed in wet clothing that night. After another half day's drive to the west, we turned northward and traveled in that direction through a nice country more or less broken with small hills, but well watered. On the morning of the first day after turning north, Honeyman reported a number of our saddle horses had strayed from camp. This gave Flood some little uneasiness, and a number of us got on our night horses without loss of time and turned out to look up the missing saddle stock. The Rebel and I set out together to the southward while others of the outfit set off to the other points of the compass.

✓ I was always a good trailer, was in fact acknowledged to be one of the best, with the exception of my brother Zack, on the San Antonio River, where we grew up as boys. In circling about that morning, I struck the trail of about twenty horses — the missing number — and at once signaled to Priest, who was about a mile distant, to join me. The ground was fortunately fresh from the recent rain and left an easy trail. We galloped along it easily for some little distance, when the trail suddenly turned and we could see that the horses had been running, having evidently received a sudden scare. On following up the trail nearly a mile, we noticed where they had quieted down and had evidently grazed for several hours, but in looking up the trail by which they had left these parts, Priest

made the discovery of signs of cattle. We located the trail of the horses soon, and were again surprised to find that they had been running as before, though the trail was much fresher, having possibly been made about dawn. We ran the trail out until it passed over a slight divide, when there before us stood the missing horses. They never noticed us, but were standing at attention, cautiously sniffing the early morning air, on which was borne to them the scent of something they feared. On reaching them, their fear seemed not the least appeased, and my partner and I had our curiosity sufficiently aroused to ride forward to the cause of their alarm. As we rounded the spur of the hill, there in plain view grazed a band of about twenty buffalo. We were almost as excited as the horses over the discovery. By dropping back and keeping the hill between us and them, then dismounting and leaving our horses, we thought we could reach the apex of the hill. It was but a small elevation, and from its summit we secured a splendid view of the animals, now less than three hundred yards distant. Flattening ourselves out, we spent several minutes watching the shaggy animals as they grazed leisurely forward, while several calves in the bunch gamboled around their mothers. A buffalo calf, I had always heard, made delicious meal, and as we had had no fresh meat since we had started, I proposed to Priest that we get one.

He suggested trying our ropes, for if we could

ever get within effective six-shooter range, a rop was much the surest. Certainly such cumbrous awkward looking animals, he said, could be no match for our Texas horses. We accordingly dropped back off the hill to our saddle stock, where Priest said that if he only had a certain horse of his out of the band we had been trailing he would promise me buffalo veal if he had to follow them to the Pan-handle. It took us but a few minutes to return to our horses, round them in, and secure the particular horse he wanted. I was riding my Nigger Boy, my regular night horse, and as only one of my mount was in this bunch, — a good horse, but sluggish, — I concluded to give my black a trial not depending on his speed so much as his staying qualities. It took but a minute for The Rebel to shift his saddle from one horse to another, where he started around to the south, while I turned to the north, so as to approach the buffalo simultaneously. I came in sight of the band first, my partner having a farther ride to make, but had only a few moments to wait, before I noticed the quarry taking alarm, and the next instant Priest dashed out from behind a spur of the hill and was after them, following suit. They turned westward, and where The Rebel and I came together on the angle of their course, we were several hundred yards behind their rear. My bunkie had the best horse in speed by all odds, and was soon crowding the band so close that they began to scatter, and though

passed several old bulls and cows, it was all I could do to keep in sight of the calves. After the chase had continued over a mile, the staying qualities of my horse began to shine, but while I was nearing the lead, The Rebel tied to the largest calf in the bunch. The calf he had on his rope was a beauty, and on overtaking him, I reined in my horse, for to have killed a second one would have been sheer waste. Priest wanted me to shoot the calf, but I refused, so he shifted the rope to the pommel of my saddle, and, dismounting, dropped the calf at the first shot. We skinned him, cut off his head, and after disemboweling him, lashed the carcass across my saddle. Then both of us mounted Priest's horse, and started on our return.

On reaching the horse stock, we succeeded in catching a sleepy old horse belonging to Rod Wheat's mount, and I rode him bridleless and bareback to camp. We received an ovation on our arrival, the recovery of the saddle horses being a secondary matter compared to the buffalo veal. So it was buffalo that scared our horses, was it, and ran them out of camp?" said McCann, as he helped to unlash the calf. "Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good." There was no particular loss of time, for the herd had grazed away on our course several miles, and after changing our mounts I overtook the herd with the news that not only the horses had been found, but that there was fresh meat in camp — and buffalo veal at that! The

other men out horse hunting, seeing the cattle strung out in traveling shape, soon returned to their places beside the trailing herd.

We held a due northward course, which was figured ought to carry us past and at least thirty miles to the westward of the big Indian encampment. The worst thing with which we had now to contend was the weather, it having rained more or less during the past day and night, or ever since we had crossed the Salt Fork. The weather had thrown the outfit into such a gloomy mood that they would scarcely speak to or answer each other. This gloomy feeling had been growing on us for several days, and it was even believed secretly that our foreman did n't know where he was; that the outfit was drifting and as good as lost. About noon of the third day, the weather continuing with cold nights, and with no abatement of the general gloom, our men on point noticed smoke arising directly ahead on our course, in a little valley through which ran a nice stream of water. When Flood's attention was directed to the smoke he rode forward to ascertain the cause, and returned worse baffled than I ever saw him.

It was an Indian camp, and had evidently been abandoned only that morning, for the fires were still smouldering. Ordering the wagon to camp on the creek and the cattle to graze forward till noon, Flood returned to the Indian camp, taking two of the boys and myself with him. It had no

been a permanent camp, yet showed evidence of having been occupied several days at least, and had contained nearly a hundred lean-tos, wickyups, and tepees — altogether too large an encampment to suit our tastes. The foreman had us hunt up the trail leaving, and once we had found it, all four of us ran it out five or six miles, when, from the freshness of it, fearing that we might be seen, we turned back. The Indians had many ponies and possibly some cattle, though the sign of the latter was hard to distinguish from buffalo. Before quitting their trail, we concluded they were from one of the reservations, and were heading for their old stamping ground, the Pan-handle country, — peaceable probably; but whether peaceable or not, we had no desire to meet with them. We lost little time, then, in returning to the herd and making late and early drives until we were out of that section.

But one cannot foresee impending trouble on the cattle trail, any more than elsewhere, and although we encamped that night a long distance to the north of the abandoned Indian camp, the next morning we came near having a stampede. It happened just at dawn. Flood had called the cook an hour before daybreak, and he had started out with Honeyman to drive in the *remuda*, which had scattered badly the morning before. They had the horses rounded up and were driving them towards camp when, about half a mile from the

wagon, four old buffalo bulls ran quartering past the horses. This was tinder among stubble, and in their panic the horses outstripped the wranglers and came thundering for camp. Luckily we had been called to breakfast, and those of us who could see what was up ran and secured our night horses. Before half of the horses were thus secured, however, one hundred and thirty loose saddle stock dashed through camp, and every horse on picket went with them, saddles and all, and dragging the picket ropes. Then the cattle jumped from the bed ground and were off like a shot, the fourth guard, who had them in charge, with them. Just for the time being it was an open question which way to ride, our saddle horses going in one direction and the herd in another. Priest was an early riser and had hustled me out early, so fortunately we reached our horses, though over half the outfit in camp could only look on and curse their luck at being left afoot. The Rebel was first in the saddle, and turned after the horses, but I rode for the herd. The cattle were not badly scared, and as the morning grew clearer, five of us quieted them down before they had run more than a short mile.

The horses, however, gave us a long, hard run, and since a horse has a splendid memory, the effects of this scare were noticeable for nearly a month after. Honeyman at once urged our foreman to hobble at night, but Flood knew the im-

importance of keeping the *remuda* strong, and refused. But his decision was forced, for just as it was growing dusk that evening, we heard the horses running, and all hands had to turn out, to surround them and bring them into camp. We hobbled every horse and side-lined certain leaders, and for fully a week following, one scare or another seemed to hold our saddle stock in constant error. During this week we turned out our night horses, and taking the worst of the leaders in their stead, tied them solidly to the wagon wheels all night, not being willing to trust to picket ropes. They would even run from a mounted man during the twilight of evening or early dawn, or from any object not distinguishable in uncertain light; but the wrangler now never went near them until after sunrise, and their nervousness gradually subsided.

Trouble never comes singly, however, and when we struck the Salt Fork, we found it raging, and impassable nearly from bank to bank. But get across we must. The swimming of it was nothing, but it was necessary to get our wagon over, and there came the rub. We swam the cattle in twenty minutes' time, but it took us a full half day to get the wagon over. The river was at least a hundred yards wide, three quarters of which was swimming to a horse. But we hunted up and down the river until we found an eddy, where the banks had a gradual approach to deep water, and started to raft the wagon over — a thing none of the out-

fit had ever seen done, though we had often heard of it around camp-fires in Texas. The first thing was to get the necessary timber to make the raft. We scouted along the Salt Fork for a mile either way before we found sufficient dry, dead cottonwood to form our raft. Then we set about cutting it, but we had only one axe, and were the poorest set of axemen that were ever called upon to perform a similar task; when we cut a tree it looked as though a beaver had gnawed it down. On horseback the Texan shines at the head of his class, but in any occupation which must be performed on foot he is never a competitor. There was scarcely a man in our outfit who could not swing a rope and tie down a steer in a given space of time, but when it came to swinging an axe to cut logs for the raft, our lustre faded. "Cutting these logs," said Joe Stallings, as he mopped the sweat from his brow, "reminds me of what the Tennessee girl who married a Texan wrote home to her sister. 'Texas,' so she wrote, 'is a good place for men and dogs, but it's hell on women and oxen.'"

Dragging the logs up to the place selected for the ford was an easy matter. They were light, and we did it with ropes from the pommels of our saddles, two to four horses being sufficient to handle any of the trees. When everything was ready, we ran the wagon out into two-foot water and built the raft under it. We had cut the dry logs from eighteen to twenty feet long, and now ran a tier of

these under the wagon between the wheels. These we lashed securely to the axle, and even lashed one large log on the underside of the hub on the outside of the wheel. Then we cross-timbered under these, lashing everything securely to this outside guard log. Before we had finished the cross-timbering, it was necessary to take an anchor rope ashore for fear our wagon would float away. By the time we had succeeded in getting twenty-five dry cottonwood logs under our wagon, it was afloat. Half a dozen of us then swam the river on our horses, taking across the heaviest rope we had for a tow line. We threw the wagon tongue back and lashed it, and making fast to the wagon with one end of the tow rope, fastened our lariats to the other. With the remainder of our unused rope, we took a guy line from the wagon and snubbed it to a tree on the south bank. Everything being in readiness, the word was given, and as those on the south bank eased away, those on horseback on the other side gave the rowel to their horses, and our commissary floated across. The wagon floated so easily that McCann was ordered on to the raft to trim the weight when it struck the current. The current carried it slightly downstream, and when it lodged on the other side, those on the south bank fastened lariats to the guy rope; and with them pulling from that side and us from ours, it was soon brought opposite the landing and hauled into shallow water. Once the raft timber was unlashed

and removed, the tongue was lowered, and from the pommels of six saddles the wagon was set high and dry on the north bank. There now only remained to bring up the cattle and swim them, which was an easy task and soon accomplished.

After putting the Salt Fork behind us, our spirits were again dampened, for it rained all the latter part of the night and until noon the next day. It was with considerable difficulty that McCann could keep his fire from drowning out while he was getting breakfast, and several of the outfit refused to eat at all. Flood knew it was useless to rally the boys, for a wet, hungry man is not to be jollied or reasoned with. Five days had now elapsed since we turned off the established trail, and half the time rain had been falling. Besides, our doubt as to where we were had been growing, so before we started that morning, Bul Durham very good-naturedly asked Flood if he had any idea where he was.

"No, I have n't. No more than you have," replied our foreman. "But this much I do know, or will just as soon as the sun comes out: I know north from south. We have been traveling north by a little west, and if we hold that course we're bound to strike the North Fork, and within a day or two afterwards we will come into the government trail, running from Fort Elliot to Camp Supply, which will lead us into our own trail. Or, if we were certain that we had cleared the Indian

reservation, we could bear to our right, and in time we would reënter the trail that way. I can't help the weather, boys, and as long as I have chuck, I 'd as lief be lost as found."

If there was any recovery in the feelings of the outfit after this talk of Flood's, it was not noticeable, and it is safe to say that two thirds of the boys believed we were in the Pan-handle of Texas. One man's opinion is as good as another's in a strange country, and while there was n't a man in the outfit who cared to suggest it, I know the majority of us would have indorsed turning north-east. But the fates smiled on us at last. About the middle of the forenoon, on the following day, we cut an Indian trail, about three days old, of probably fifty horses. A number of us followed the trail several miles on its westward course, and among other things discovered that they had been driving a small bunch of cattle, evidently making for the sand hills which we could see about twenty miles to our left. How they had come by the cattle was a mystery, — perhaps by forced levy, perhaps from a stampede. One thing was certain: the trail must have contributed them, for there were none but trail cattle in the country. This was reassuring and gave some hint of guidance. We were all tickled, therefore, after nooning that day and on starting the herd in the afternoon, to hear our foreman give orders to point the herd a little east of north. The next few days we made long drives,

our saddle horses recovered from their scare, and the outfit fast regained its spirits.

On the morning of the tenth day after leaving the trail, we loitered up a long slope to a divide in our lead from which we sighted timber to the north. This we supposed from its size must be the North Fork. Our route lay up this divide some distance and before we left it, some one in the rear sighted a dust cloud to the right and far behind us. A dust would hardly rise on a still morning without a cause, we turned the herd off the divide and pushed on, for we suspected Indians. Flood and Priest hung back on the divide, watching the dust signals and after the herd had left them several miles in the rear, they turned and rode towards it, — a move which the outfit could hardly make out. It was nearly noon when we saw them returning in a long lope, and when they came in sight of the herd Priest waved his hat in the air and gave the long yell. When he explained that there was a herd of cattle on the trail in the rear and to our right, the yell went around the herd, and was reëchoed by our wrangler and cook in the rear. The spirits of the outfit instantly rose. We halted the herd and camped for noon, and McCann set out his best in celebrating the occasion. It was the most enjoyable meal we had had in the past ten days. After a good noonday rest, we set out, and having entered the trail during the afternoon, crossed the North Fork late that evening. As we were going into

camp, we noticed a horseman coming up the trail, who turned out to be smiling Nat Straw, whom we had left on the Colorado River. "Well, girls," said Nat, dismounting, "I did n't know who you were, but I just thought I'd ride ahead and overtake whoever it was and stay all night. Indians? Yes; I would n't drive on a trail that had n't any excitement on it. I gave the last big encampment ten strays, and won them all back and four ponies besides on a horse race. Oh, yes, got some running stock with us. How soon will supper be ready, Cousi? Get up something extra, for you've got company."

CHAPTER XI

A BOGGY FORD

THAT night we learned from Straw our location on the trail. We were far above the Indian reservation, and instead of having been astray our former man had held a due northward course, and we were probably as far on the trail as if we had followed the regular route. So in spite of all our good maxims, we had been borrowing trouble; we were never over thirty miles to the westward of what was then the new Western Cattle Trail. We concluded that the "Running W" herd had turned back, as Straw brought the report that some herder had recrossed Red River the day before his arrival, giving for reasons the wet season and the danger of getting waterbound.

About noon of the second day after leaving the North Fork of Red River, we crossed the Washita, a deep stream, the slippery banks of which gave every indication of a recent rise. We had no trouble in crossing either wagon or herd, it being hardly a check in our onward course. The abandonment of the regular trail the past ten days had been of noticeable benefit to our herd, for the cattle had had an abundance of fresh country to graze over as we

plenty of rest. But now that we were back on the trail, we gave them their freedom and frequently covered twenty miles a day, until we reached the South Canadian, which proved to be the most elusive stream we had yet encountered. It also showed, like the Washita, every evidence of having been on a recent rampage. On our arrival there was no volume of water to interfere, but it had a silt and quicksand bottom that would bog a saddle blanket. Our foreman had been on ahead and examined the regular crossing, and when he returned, freely expressed his opinion that we would be unable to trail the herd across, but might hope to effect it by cutting into small bunches. When we came, therefore, within three miles of the river, we turned off the trail to a near-by creek and thoroughly watered the herd. This was contrary to our practice, for we usually wanted the herd thirsty when reaching a large river. But any cow brute that halted in crossing the Canadian that day was doomed to sink into quicksands from which escape was doubtful.

We held the wagon and saddle horses in the rear, and when we were half a mile away from the trail head, cut off about two hundred head of the leaders and started for the crossing, leaving only the horse angler and one man with the herd. On reaching the river we gave them an extra push, and the cattle plunged into the muddy water. Before the cattle had advanced fifty feet, instinct warned them of the treacherous footing, and the leaders tried to

turn back; but by that time we had the entire bunch in the water and were urging them forward. The men had halted but a moment and begun milling, and several heavy steers sank; then we gave way and allowed the rest to come back. We did not realize fully the treachery of this river until we saw that twenty cattle were caught in the merciless grass and the quicksand. They sank slowly to the level of their bodies, which gave sufficient resistance to support their weight, but they were hopelessly bogged. We allowed the free cattle to return to the bank and immediately turned our attention to those that were bogged, some of whom were nearly submerged by water. We dispatched some of the boys to the wagon for our heavy corral ropes and a bundle of horse-hobbles; and the remainder of us, stripped of the belt, waded out and surveyed the situation in close quarters. We were all experienced in handling bogged cattle, though this quicksand was the most deceptive that I, at least, had ever witnessed. The bottom of the river as we waded through was solid under our feet, and as long as we were moving it felt so, but the moment we stopped the cattle sank as in a quagmire. The "pull" of this quicksand was so strong that four of us were unable to lift a steer's tail out, once it was imbedded in the sand. And when we had released a tail by burying our arms around it to arm's length and freed it, it would sink of its own weight in a minute's time and we would have to be burrowed out again. To a

his we had to coil up the tails and tie them with soft rope hobble.

Fortunately none of the cattle were over forty feet from the bank, and when our heavy rope arrived we divided into two gangs and began the work of rescue. We first took a heavy rope from the animal's horns to solid footing on the river bank, and tied to this five or six of our lariats. Meanwhile others rolled a steer over as far as possible and began burrowing with their hands down alongside a fore and hind leg simultaneously until they could pass a small rope around the pastern above the cloof, or better yet through the cloven in the hoof, when the leg could be readily lifted by two men. We could not stop burrowing, however, for a moment, or the space would fill and solidify. Once a leg was freed, we doubled it back short and securely tied it with a hobble, and when the fore and hind leg were thus secured, we turned the animal over on that side and released the other legs in similar manner. Then we hastened out of the water and into our saddles, and wrapped the loose end of our ropes to the pommels, having already tied the lariats to the heavy corral rope from the animal's horns. When the word was given, we took a good swinging start, and unless something gave way there was one steer less in the bog. After we had landed the animal high and dry on the bank, it was but a minute's work to free the rope and untie the hobbles. Then it was advisable to

get into the saddle with little loss of time and give him a wide berth, for he generally arose angry and sullen.

It was dark before we got the last of the bugged cattle out and retraced our way to camp from the first river on the trip that had turned us. But we were not the least discouraged, for we felt certain there was a ford that had a bottom somewhere within a few miles, and we could hunt it on the morrow. The next one, however, we would try before we put the cattle in. There was a question that the treacherous condition of the river was due to the recent freshet, which had brought down new deposits of sediment and had agitated the old, even to changing the channel of the river so that it had not as yet had sufficient time to settle and solidify.

The next morning after breakfast, Flood and two or three of the boys set out up the river, while an equal number of us started, under the leadership of The Rebel, down the river on a similar errand, — to prospect for a crossing. Our party scouted for about five miles, and the only safe footing we could find was a swift, narrow channel between the bank and an island in the river, while beyond the island was a much wider channel with water deep enough in several places to swim on saddle horses. The footing seemed quite secure for our horses, but the cattle were much heavier; and if an animal ever bogged in the river, there was

water enough to drown him before help could be rendered. We stopped our horses a number of times, however, to try the footing, and in none of our experiments was there any indication of quicksand, so we counted the crossing safe. On our return we found the herd already in motion, headed up the river where our foreman had located a crossing. As it was then useless to make any mention of the island crossing which we had located, at least until a trial had been given to the upper ford, we said nothing. When we came within half a mile of the new ford, we held up the herd and allowed them to graze, and brought up the *remuda* and crossed and recrossed them without bogging a single horse. Encouraged at this, we cut off about a hundred head of heavy lead cattle and started for the ford. We had a good push on them when we struck the water, for there were ten riders around them and Flood was in the lead. We called to them several times that the cattle were bogging, but they never halted until he pulled out on the opposite bank, leaving twelve of the heaviest steers in the quicksand.

"Well, in all my experience in trail work," said Flood, as he gazed back at the dozen animals struggling in the quicksand, "I never saw as deceptive a bottom in any river. We used to fear the Cimarron and Platte, but the old South Canadian is the girl that can lay it over them both. Well, there ain't any use crying over spilt milk

and we have n't got men enough to hold two here so surround them, boys, and we'll recross them we leave twenty-four more in the river. Take them back a good quarter, fellows, and bring them up on a run, and I'll take the lead when they strike the water; and give them no show to b until they get across."

As the little bunch of cattle had already grazed out nearly a quarter, we rounded them into a compact body and started for the river to recross them. The nearer we came to the river, the faster we went till we struck the water. In several places where there were channels, we could neither force the cattle nor ride ourselves faster than a walk on account of the depth of the water, but when we struck the shallows, which were the really dangerous places, we forced the cattle with horse and quirt. Near the middle of the river, in shoal water, Rod Wheat was quirting up the cattle, when a big deer steer, trying to get out of his reach, sank in the quicksand, and Rod's horse stumbled across the animal and was thrown. He floundered in attempting to rise, and his hind feet sank to the haunches. His ineffectual struggles caused him to sink farther to the flanks in the loblolly which the tramping of the cattle had caused, and there horse and steer lay, side by side, like two in a bog. Wheat loosened the cinches of the saddle on either side, and stripping the bridle off, brought up the rear, carrying saddle, bridle, and blankets on

back. The river was at least three hundred yards wide, and when we got to the farther bank, our horses were so exhausted that we dismounted and let them blow. A survey showed we had left a total of fifteen cattle and the horse in the quicksands. But we congratulated ourselves that we had bogged down only three head in recrossing. Getting these cattle out was a much harder task than the twenty head gave us the day before, for many of these were bogged more than a hundred yards from the bank. But no time was to be lost; the wagon was brought up in a hurry, fresh horses were caught, and we stripped for the fray. While McCann got dinner we got out the horse, even saving the cinches that were abandoned in freeing him of the saddle.

During the afternoon we were compelled to adopt a new mode of procedure, for with the limited amount of rope at hand, we could only use one rope for drawing the cattle out to solid footing, after they were freed from the quagmire. But we had four good mules to our chuck wagon, and instead of dragging the cattle ashore from the pommels of saddles, we tied one end of the rope to the hind axle and used the mules in snaking the cattle out. This worked splendidly, but every time we freed a steer we had to drive the wagon well out of reach, for fear he might charge the wagon and team. But with three crews working in the water, tying up tails and legs, the work progressed more

rapidly than it had done the day before, and two hours before sunset the last animal had been freed. We had several exciting incidents during the operation, for several steers showed fight, and when released went on the prod for the first thing in sight. The herd was grazing nearly a mile away during the afternoon, and as fast as a steer was pulled out, some one would take a horse and give the freed animal a start for the herd. One big black steer turned on Flood, who generally attended to this, and gave him a spirited chase. In getting out of the angry steer's way, he passed near the wagon, when the maddened beef turned from Flood and charged the commissary. McCann was riding the nigh wheel mule, and when he saw the steer coming, he poured the whip into the mules and circled around like a battery in field practice, trying to get out of the way. Flood made several attempts to cut off the steer from the wagon but he followed it like a mover's dog, until a number of us, fearing our mules would be gored, ran out of the water, mounted our horses, and joined in the chase. When we came up with the circus, our foreman called to us to rope the beef, and Fox Quarternight, getting in the first cast, caught him by the two front feet and threw him heavily. Before he could rise, several of us had dismounted and were sitting on him like buzzards on carrion. McCann then drove the team around behind the sand dune, out of sight; we released the beef

and he was glad to return to the herd, quite sobered by the throwing.

Another incident occurred near the middle of the afternoon. From some cause or other, the hind leg of a steer, after having been tied up, became loosened. No one noticed this; but when, after several successive trials, during which Barney McCann exhausted a large vocabulary of profanity, the mule team was unable to move the steer, six of us fastened our lariats to the main rope, and dragged the beef ashore with great *éclat*. But when one of the boys dismounted to unloose the nobbles and rope, a sight met our eyes that sent a sickening sensation through us, for the steer had left one hind leg in the river, neatly disjointed at the knee. Then we knew why the mules had failed to move him, having previously supposed his size was the difficulty, for he was one of the largest steers in the herd. No doubt the steer's leg had been unjointed in swinging him around, but it had taken six extra horses to sever the ligaments and skin, while the merciless quicksands of the Canadian held the limb. A friendly shot ended the steer's sufferings, and before we finished our work for the day, a flight of buzzards were circling around in anticipation of the coming feast.

Another day had been lost, and still the South Canadian defied us. We drifted the cattle back to the previous night camp, using the same bed ground for our herd. It was then that The Rebel

broached the subject of a crossing at the island which we had examined that morning, and offered to show it to our foreman by daybreak. We put two extra horses on picket that night, and the next morning, before the sun was half an hour high, the foreman and The Rebel had returned from the island down the river with word that we were to give the ford a trial, though we could not cross the wagon there. Accordingly we grazed the herd down the river and came opposite the island near the middle of the forenoon. As usual, we cut off about one hundred of the lead cattle, the leaders naturally being the heaviest, and started them into the water. We reached the island and scaled the farther bank without a single animal losing his footing. We then brought up a second bunch of double, and a third of triple the number of the first, and crossed the river with safety, but as yet the Canadian was dallying with us. As we crossed each successive bunch the tramping of the cattle increasingly agitated the sands, and when we had the herd about half over we bogged our first steer on the farther landing. As the water was so shallow that drowning was out of the question, we went back and trailed the remainder of the herd, knowing the bogged steer would be there when we were ready for him.

The island was about two hundred yards long by twenty wide, lying up and down the river, and in leaving it for the farther bank, we always pushed off at the upper end. But now, in traili

the remainder of the cattle over, we attempted to force them into the water at the lower end, as the footing at that point of this middle ground had not, as yet, been trampled up as had the upper end. Everything worked nicely until the rear guard of the last five or six hundred congested on the island, the outfit being scattered on both sides of the river as well as in the middle, leaving a scarcity of men at all points. When the final rear guard had reached the river the cattle were striking out for the farther shore from every quarter of the island at their own sweet will, stopping to drink and loitering on the farther side, for there was no one to hustle them out.

All were over at last, and we were on the point of congratulating ourselves, — for, although the herd had scattered badly, we had less than a dozen bogged cattle, and those near the shore, — when suddenly up the river over a mile, there began a rapid shooting. Satisfied that it was by our own men, we separated, and, circling right and left, began to throw the herd together. Some of us rode up the river bank and soon located the trouble. We had not ridden a quarter of a mile before we passed a number of our herd bogged, these having reëntered the river for their noonday drink, and on coming up with the men who had done the shooting, we found them throwing the herd out from the water. They reported that a large number of cattle were bogged farther up the river.

All hands rounded in the herd, and drifting the out nearly a mile from the river, left them under two herders, when the remainder of us returned to the bogged cattle. There were by actual count including those down at the crossing, over eight bogged cattle that required our attention, extending over a space of a mile or more above the island ford.

The outlook was anything but pleasing. Flood was almost speechless over the situation, for it might have been guarded against. But realizing the task before us, we recrossed the river for dinner, well knowing the inner man needed fortifying for the work before us. No sooner had we disposed of the meal and secured a change of mounts around, than we sent two men to relieve the men on herd. When they were off, Flood divided up his forces for the afternoon work.

"It will never do," said he, "to get separated from our commissary. So, Priest, you take the wagon and *remuda* and go back up to the regular crossing and get our wagon over somehow. The cook will be the cook and wrangler besides yourself, you may have two other men. You will have to lighten your load; and don't attempt to cross the mules hitched to the wagon; rely on your saddle horses for getting the wagon over. Forrest, and Bull, with the two men on herd, take the cattle to the nearest creek and water them well. After watering, drift them back, so they will be with

mile of these bogged cattle. Then leave two men with them and return to the river. I'll take the remainder of the outfit and begin at the ford and work up the river. Get the ropes and hobbles, boys, and come on."

John Officer and I were left with The Rebel to get the wagon across, and while waiting for the men on herd to get in, we hooked up the mules. Honeyman had the *remuda* in hand to start the minute our herders returned, their change of mounts being already tied to the wagon wheels. The need of haste was very imperative, for the river might rise without an hour's notice, and a two-foot rise would drown every hoof in the river as well as cut us off from our wagon. The South Canadian has its source in the Staked Plains and the mountains of New Mexico, and freshets there would cause a rise here, local conditions never affecting a river of such width. Several of us had seen these Plains rivers, — when the mountain was sportive and dallying with the plain, — under a clear sky and without any warning of falling weather, rise with a rush of water like a tidal wave or the stream from a broken dam. So when our men from herd galloped in, we stripped their saddles from tired horses and cinched them to fresh ones, while they, that there might be no loss of time, bolted their dinners. It took us less than an hour to reach the ford, where we unloaded the wagon of everything but the chuck-box, which was ironed fast. We had an extra saddle

in the wagon, and McCann was mounted on a good horse, for he could ride as well as cook. Pat and I rode the river, selecting a route; and on our return, all five of us tied our lariats to the top and sides of the wagon. We took a running start, and until we struck the farther bank we gave the wagon no time to sink, but pulled it out of the river with a shout, our horses' flanks heaving. Then recrossing the river, we lashed all the bedding to four gentle saddle horses and led them across. But to get our provisions across was no easy matter, for we were heavily loaded, having taken a supply at Doan's sufficient to last us until we reached Dodge, a good month's journey. Yet it must go, and we kept a string of horsemen crossing and recrossing for an hour, carrying everything from pots and pans to axle grease, as well as the staples of life. When we had got the contents of the wagon finally over and reloaded, there remained nothing but crossing the saddle stock.

The wagon mules had been turned loose, and were harnessed, while we were crossing the wagon and our effects; and when we drove the *remuda* into the river, one of the wheel mules turned back, and in spite of every man, reached the bank again. In spite of the boys hurried the others across, but McCann and I turned back after our wheeler. We caught him without any trouble, but our attempt to lead him across failed. In spite of all the profane threats addressed personally to him, he proved a credi-

his sire, and we lost ground in trying to force him into the river. The boys across the river watched a few minutes, when all recrossed to our assistance.

"Time's too valuable to monkey with a mule to-day," said Priest, as he rode up; "skin off that harness."

It was off at once, and we blindfolded and backed him up to the river bank; then taking a rope around his forelegs, we threw him, hog-tied him, and rolled him into the water. With a rope around his forelegs and through the ring in the bridle bit, we asked no further favors, but snaked him ignominiously over to the farther side and reharnessed him into the team.

The afternoon was more than half spent when we reached the first bogged cattle, and by the time the wagon overtook us we had several tied up and ready for the mule team to give us a lift. The herd had been watered in the mean time and was grazing about in sight of the river, and as we occasionally drifted a freed animal out to the herd, we saw others being turned in down the river. About an hour before sunset, Flood rode up to us and reported having cleared the island ford, while a middle outfit under Forrest was working down towards it. During the twilight hours of evening, the wagon and saddle horses moved out to the herd and made ready to camp, but we remained until dark, and with but three horses released a number

of light cows. We were the last outfit to reach the wagon, and as Honeyman had tied up our horses, there was nothing for us to do but eat and go to bed, to which we required no coaxing. We all knew that early morning would find us more working with bogged cattle.

The night passed without incident, and the morning in the division of the forces, Priest again allowed the wagon to do the snaking with, but only four men, counting McCann. The remainder of the outfit was divided into seven gangs, working near enough each other to lend a hand in case an extra horse was needed on a job. The third animal we struck in the river that morning was the black steer that had showed fight the day before. Knowing his temper would not be improved by soaking in the quicksand overnight, we changed our tactics. While we were tying up the steer's tail and legs, McCann secreted his position at a safe distance. Then he took a lariat, fastened the tongue of the wagon to a cottonwood tree, jacking up a hind wheel, used it as a windlass. When all was ready, we tied the loose end of the cable rope to a spoke, and allowing the rope to run on the hub, manned the windlass and drew the steer ashore. When the steer was freed, McCann, having no horse at hand, climbed into the wagon while the rest of us sought safety in our saddles, and gave him a wide berth. When he came to his senses, he was sullen with rage and refused to move out

his tracks. Priest rode out and baited him at a distance, and McCann, from his safe position, attempted to give him a scare, when he savagely charged the wagon. McCann reached down, and securing a handful of flour, dashed it into his eyes, which made him back away; and, kneeling, he fell to cutting the sand with his horns. Rising, he charged the wagon a second time, and catching the wagon sheet with his horns, tore two slits in it like slashes of a razor. By this time The Rebel ventured a little nearer, and attracted the steer's attention. He started for Priest, who gave the quirt to his horse, and for the first quarter mile had a close race. The steer, however, weakened by the severe treatment he had been subjected to, soon fell to the rear, and gave up the chase and continued on his way to the herd.

After this incident we worked down the river until the outfits met. We finished the work before noon, having lost three full days by the quicksands of the Canadian. As we pulled into the trail that afternoon near the first divide and looked back to take a parting glance at the river, we saw a dust cloud across the Canadian which we knew must be the Ellison herd under Nat Straw. Quince Forrest, noticing it at the same time as I did, rode forward and said to me, "Well, old Nat will get it in the neck this time, if that old girl dallies with him as she did with us. I don't wish him any bad luck, but I do hope he'll bog enough cattle to keep

his hand in practice. It will be just about his luck though, to find it settled and solid enough to cross.

And the next morning we saw his signal in the sky about the same distance behind us, and knew he had forded without any serious trouble.

CHAPTER XII

THE NORTH FORK

THERE was never very much love lost between government soldiers and our tribe, so we swept past Camp Supply in contempt a few days later, and crossed the North Fork of the Canadian to camp for the night. Flood and McCann went into the post, as our supply of flour and navy beans was running rather low, and our foreman had hopes that he might be able to get enough of these staples from the sutler to last until we reached Dodge. He also hoped to receive some word from Lovell.

The rest of us had no lack of occupation, as a result of a chance find of mine that morning. Honeyman had stood my guard the night before, and in return, I had got up when he was called to help rustle the horses. We had every horse under hand before the sun peeped over the eastern horizon, and when returning to camp with the *remuda*, as I rode through a bunch of sumach bush, I found a wild turkey's nest with sixteen fresh eggs in it. Honeyman rode up, when I dismounted, and putting them in my hat, handed them up to Billy until I could mount, for they were beauties and as

precious to us as gold. There was an egg for each man in the outfit and one over, and McCann threw a heap of swagger into the inquiry, "Gentlemen, how will you have your eggs this morning?" just as though it was an everyday affair. They were issued to us fried, and I naturally felt that the odd egg, by rights, ought to fall to me, but the opposing majority was formidable, — fourteen to one — so I yielded. A number of ways were suggested to allot the odd egg, but the gambling fever in being rabid, raffling or playing cards for it seemed to be the proper caper. Raffling had few advocates.

"It reflects on any man's raising," said Quince Forrest, contemptuously, "to suggest the idea of raffling, when we've got cards and all night long to play for that egg. The very idea of raffling for an egg I'd like to see myself pulling straws or drawing numbers from a hat, like some giggling girl at a church fair. Poker is a science; the highest court in Texas has said so, and I want some little show for my interest in that speckled egg. What have you spent twenty years learning the game for, will some of you tell me? Why, it lets me out if you raffled it." The argument remained unanswered, and the play for it gave interest to that night.

As soon as supper was over and the first guard had taken the herd, the poker game opened, each man being given ten beans for chips. We had only one deck of cards, so one game was all the

ould be run at a time, but there were six players, and when one was frozen out another sat in and took his place. As wood was plentiful, we had a good fire, and this with the aid of the cook's lantern gave an abundance of light. We unrolled the bed to serve as a table, sat down on it Indian fashion, and as fast as one seat was vacated there was a man ready to fill it, for we were impatient for our turns in the game. The talk turned on an accident which had happened that afternoon. While we were crossing the North Fork of the Canadian, Bob Blades attempted to ride out of the river below the crossing, when his horse bogged down. He instantly dismounted, and his horse after floundering around scrambled out and up the bank, but with a broken leg. Our foreman had ridden up and ordered the horse unsaddled and shot, to put him out of his suffering.

While waiting our turns, the accident to the horse was referred to several times, and finally Blades, who was sitting in the game, turned to us who were lounging around the fire, and asked, "Did you all notice that look he gave me as I was cinching the saddle? If he had been human, he might have told what that look meant. Good thing he was a horse and could n't realize."

From then on, the yarning and conversation was strictly *horse*.

"It was always a mystery to me," said Billy Honeyman, "how a Mexican or Indian knows so

much more about a horse than any of us. I had seen them trail a horse across a country for miles riding in a long lope, with not a trace or sign visible to me. I was helping a horseman once to drive a herd of horses to San Antonio from the lower Rio Grande country. We were driving them to market, and as there were no railroads south then, we had to take along saddle horses to ride home on after disposing of the herd. We always took favorite horses which we did n't wish to sell, generally two apiece for that purpose. This time when we were at least a hundred miles from the ranch, a Mexican, who had brought along a horse to ride home, thought he would n't hold this pet one night, fancying the animal would leave the others. Well, next morning his pet was missing. We scoured the country around and the trail we had come over for ten miles, but no horse. As the country was all open, we felt positive we would go back to the ranch.

“Two days later and about forty miles higher up the road, the Mexican was riding in the lead of the herd, when suddenly he reined in his horse, throwing him back on his haunches, and waved some of us to come to him, never taking his eyes off what he saw in the road. The owner was standing on one point of the herd and I on the other. We hurried around to him and both rode up at the same time, when the vaquero blurted out, ‘There’s my horse’s track.’”

“ ‘What horse?’ asked the owner.

“ ‘My own; the horse we lost two days ago,’ replied the Mexican.

“ ‘How do you know it’s your horse’s track from the thousands of others that fill the road?’ demanded his employer.

“ ‘Don Tomas,’ said the Aztec, lifting his hat, ‘how do I know your step or voice from a thousand others?’

“We laughed at him. He had been a peon, and that made him respect our opinions — at least he avoided differing with us. But as we drove on that afternoon, we could see him in the lead, watching for that horse’s track. Several times he turned in his saddle and looked back, pointed to some track in the road, and lifted his hat to us. At camp that night we tried to draw him out, but he was silent.

“But when we were nearing San Antonio, we overtook a number of wagons loaded with wool, lying over, as it was Sunday, and there among their horses and mules was our Mexican’s missing horse. The owner of the wagons explained how he came to have the horse. The animal had come to his camp one morning, back about twenty miles from where we had lost him, while he was feeding grain to his work stock, and being a pet insisted on being fed. Since then, I have always had a lot of respect for a Greaser’s opinion regarding a horse.”

“Turkey eggs is too rich for my blood,” said

Bob Blades, rising from the game. "I don't c a continental who wins the egg now, for whene I get three queens pat beat by a four card dra I have misgivings about the deal. And old Quin thinks he can stack cards. He could n't sta hay."

"Speaking about Mexicans and Indians," sa Wyatt Roundtree, "I've got more use for a go horse than I have for either of those grades of h manity. I had a little experience over east her on the cut off from the Chisholm trail, a few yea ago, that gave me all the Injun I want for son time to come. A band of renegade Cheyennes ha hung along the trail for several years, scaring begging passing herds into giving them a beef. C course all the cattle herds had more or less stray among them, so it was easier to cut out one o these than to argue the matter. There was plent of herds on the trail then, so this band of Indian got bolder than bandits. In the year I'm speak ing of, I went up with a herd of horses belonging to a Texas man, who was in charge with us. When we came along with our horses — only six men al told — the chief of the band, called Running Bul Sheep, got on the bluff bigger than a wolf and demanded six horses. Well, that Texan was n't looking for any particular Injun that day to give six of his own dear horses to. So we just drove on, paying no attention to Mr. Bull Sheep. About half a mile farther up the trail, the chief overtook

with all his bucks, and they were an ugly looking lot. Well, this time he held up four fingers, meaning that four horses would be acceptable. But the Texan was n't recognizing the Indian levy of taxation that year. When he refused them, the Indians never parleyed a moment, but set up a 'ki yi' and began circling round the herd on their ponies, Bull Sheep in the lead.

"As the chief passed the owner, his horse on a run, he gave a special shrill 'ki yi,' whipped a short carbine out of its scabbard, and shot twice into the rear of the herd. Never for a moment considering consequences, the Texan brought his six-shooter into action. It was a long, purty shot, and Mr. Bull Sheep threw his hands in the air and came off his horse backward, hard hit. This shooting in the rear of the horses gave them such a scare that we never checked them short of a mile. While the other Indians were holding a little pow-wow over their chief, we were making good time the other direction, considering that we had over eight hundred loose horses. Fortunately our wagon and saddle horses had gone ahead that morning, but in the run we overtook them. As soon as we checked the herd from its scare, we turned them to the trail, stretched ropes from the wheels of the wagon, ran the saddle horses in, and changed mounts just a little quicker than I ever saw it done before or since. The cook had a saddle in the wagon, so we caught him up a horse, clapped

leather on him, and tied him behind the wagon case of an emergency. And you can just bet changed to our best horses. When we overtook the herd, we were at least a mile and a half from where the shooting occurred, and there was no Indian in sight, but we felt that they had n't given it up. We had n't long to wait, though we would have waited willingly, before we heard their yells and saw the dust rising in clouds behind us. We quit the herd and wagon right there and rode over a swell of ground ahead that would give us a new view of the scenery. The first view we caught of them was not very encouraging. They were riding after us like fiends and kicking up a dust like a wind storm. We had nothing but six-shooters, good for long range. The owner of the horses admitted that it was useless to try to save the herd now, and if our scalps were worth saving it was high time to make ourselves scarce.

"Cantonment was a government post about twenty-five miles away, so we rode for it. Our horses were good Spanish stock, and the Indian little bench-legged ponies were no match for them. But not satisfied with the wagon and herd falling into their hands, they followed us until we were within sight of the post. As hard luck would have it, the cavalry stationed at this post were on some escort duty, and the infantry were useless in this case. When the cavalry returned a few days later, they tried to round up those Indian

and the Indian agent used his influence, but the horses were so divided up and scattered that they were never recovered."

"And did the man lose his horses entirely?" asked Flood, who had anteed up his last bean and joined us.

"He did. There was, I remember, a tin horn lawyer up about Dodge who thought he could recover their value, as these were agency Indians and the government owed them money. But all I got for three months' wages due me was the horse I got away on."

McCann had been frozen out during Roundtree's yarn, and had joined the crowd of story-tellers on the other side of the fire. Forrest was feeling quite gala, and took a special delight in taunting the vanquished as they dropped out.

"Is McCann there?" inquired he, well knowing he was. "I just wanted to ask, would it be any trouble to poach that egg for my breakfast and serve it with a bit of toast; I'm feeling a little bit dainty. You'll poach it for me, won't you, please?"

McCann never moved a muscle as he replied, "Will you please go to hell?"

The story-telling continued for some time, and while Fox Quarternight was regaling us with the history of a little black mare that a neighbor of theirs in Kentucky owned, a dispute arose in the card game regarding the rules of discard and draw.

"I'm too old a girl," said The Rebel, angry to Forrest, "to allow a pullet like you to teach this game. When it's my deal, I'll discard j when I please, and it's none of your business long as I keep within the rules of the game which sounded final, and the game continued.

Quarternight picked up the broken thread of narrative, and the first warning we had of the lousiness of the hour was Bull Durham calling to from the game, "One of you fellows can have a place, just as soon as we play this jack pot. I've got to saddle my horse and get ready for our guard. Oh, I'm on velvet, anyhow, and before this game ends, I'll make old Quince curl his tail. I've got him going south now."

It took me only a few minutes to lose my character at the turkey egg, and I sought my blankets. At one A. M., when our guard was called, the beats were almost equally divided among Priest, Stallings, and Durham; and in view of the fact that Forrest, whom we all wanted to see beaten, had met defeat, they agreed to cut the cards for the turkey egg, Stallings winning. We mounted our horses and rode out into the night, and the second guard rode back to our camp-fire, singing:—

"Two little niggers upstairs in bed,
One turned ober to de oder an' said,
'How 'bout dat short'nin' bread,
How 'bout dat short'nin' bread?'"

CHAPTER XIII

DODGE

AT Camp Supply, Flood received a letter from Lovell, requesting him to come on into Dodge ahead of the cattle. So after the first night's camp above the Cimarron, Flood caught up a favorite horse, informed the outfit that he was going to quit us for a few days, and designated Quince Forrest as the *segundo* during his absence.

"You have a wide, open country from here into Dodge," said he, when ready to start, "and I'll make inquiry for you daily from men coming in, or from the buckboard which carries the mail to Supply. I'll try to meet you at Mulberry Creek, which is about ten miles south of Dodge. I'll make that town to-night, and you ought to make the Mulberry in two days. You will see the smoke of passing trains to the north of the Arkansaw, from the first divide south of Mulberry. When you reach that creek, in case I don't meet you, hold the herd there and three or four of you can come on into town. But I'm almost certain to meet you," he called back as he rode away.

"Priest," said Quince, when our foreman had gone, "I reckon you didn't handle your herd to

suit the old man when he left us that time at the Palo Verde Gap. But I think he used rare judgment this time in selecting a *segundo*. The only thing that frets me is, I'm afraid he'll meet us before we reach the Mulberry, and that won't give me any chance to go in ahead like a sure enough fellow. Fact is I have business there; I deposited a few months' wages at the Long Branch gambling house last year when I was in Dodge, and failed to take a receipt. I just want to drop in and make an inquiry if they gave me credit, and if the account is drawing interest. I think it's all right, for the man I deposited it with was a clever fellow who asked me to have a drink with him just as I was leaving. Still, I'd like to step in and see him again."

Early in the afternoon of the second day after our foreman left us, we sighted the smoke of passing trains, though they were at least fifteen miles distant, and long before we reached the Mulberry a livery rig came down the trail to meet us. Forrest's chagrin, Flood, all dressed up and with a white collar on, was the driver, while on a back seat sat Don Lovell and another cowman by the name of McNulta. Every rascal of us gave cowman Don the glad hand as they drove around the herd, while he, liberal and delighted as a bridegroom, passed out the cigars by the handful. The cattle were looking fine, which put the old man in high spirits, and he inquired of each of us if our

health was good and if Flood had fed us well. They loitered around the herd the rest of the evening, until we threw off the trail to graze and camp for the night, when Lovell declared his intention of staying all night with the outfit.

While we were catching horses during the evening, Lovell came up to me where I was saddling my night horse, and recognizing me gave me news of my brother Bob. "I had a letter yesterday from him," he said, "written from Red Fork, which is just north of the Cimarron River over on the Chisolm route. He reports everything going along nicely, and I'm expecting him to show up here within a week. His herd are all beef steers, and are contracted for delivery at the Crow Indian Agency. He's not driving as fast as Flood, but we've got to have our beef for that delivery in better condition, as they have a new agent there this year, and he may be one of these knowing fellows. Sorry you could n't see your brother, but if you have any word to send him, I'll deliver it."

I thanked him for the interest he had taken in me, and assured him that I had no news for Robert; but took advantage of the opportunity to inquire if our middle brother, Zack Quirk, was on the trail with any of his herds. Lovell knew him, but felt positive he was not with any of his outfits.

We had an easy night with the cattle. Lovell insisted on standing a guard, so he took Rod Wheat's

horse and stood the first watch, and after returning to the wagon, he and McNulta, to our great interest, argued the merits of the different trails until midnight. McNulta had two herds coming in on the Chisholm trail, while Lovell had two herds on the Western and only one on the Chisholm.

The next morning Forrest, who was again in charge, received orders to cross the Arkansas River shortly after noon, and then let half the herd fit come into town. The old trail crossed the river about a mile above the present town of Dodge City, Kansas, so when we changed horses at noon, the first and second guards caught up their top horses, ransacked their war bags, and donned their best togger. We crossed the river about one o'clock in order to give the boys a good holiday, the strong current of water making the river easily fordable. McCaskey, after dinner was over, drove down on the south side for the benefit of a bridge which spanned the river opposite the town. It was the first bridge he had been able to take advantage of in over a thousand miles of travel, and to-day he spurred the cattle ford as though he had never crossed a river before. Once safely over the river, and with a full understanding that the herd would camp for the night about six miles north on Duck Creek, some of our men quit us and rode for the town in a full gallop. Before the rig left us in the morning McNulta, who was thoroughly familiar with Dodge City, and an older man than Lovell, in a friendly

fatherly spirit, seeing that many of us were youngsters, had given us an earnest talk and plenty of good advice.

"I've been in Dodge every summer since '77," said the old cowman, "and I can give you boys some points. Dodge is one town where the average bad man of the West not only finds his equal, but finds himself badly handicapped. The buffalo hunters and range men have protested against the iron rule of Dodge's peace officers, and nearly every protest has cost human life. Don't ever get the impression that you can ride your horses into a saloon, or shoot out the lights in Dodge; it may go somewhere else, but it don't go there. So I want to warn you to behave yourselves. You can wear your six-shooters into town, but you'd better leave them at the first place you stop, hotel, livery, or business house. And when you leave town, call for your pistols, but don't ride out shooting; omit that. Most cowboys think it's an infringement on their rights to give up shooting in town, and if it stands, for your six-shooters are no match for Winchesters and buckshot; and Dodge's officers are as game a set of men as ever faced danger."

Nearly a generation has passed since McNulta, the Texan cattle drover, gave our outfit this advice one June morning on the Mulberry, and in setting down this record, I have only to scan the roster of the peace officials of Dodge City to admit

its correctness. Among the names that graced the official roster, during the brief span of the ten days, were the brothers Ed, Jim, and "Bar" Masterson, Wyatt Earp, Jack Bridges, "Doc" Holliday, Charles Bassett, William Tillman, "Shotgun" Collins, Joshua Webb, Mayor A. Webster, and "Mysterious" Dave Mather. The puppets of no romance ever written can compare with these officers in fearlessness. And let it be understood, there were plenty to protest against their rule; almost daily during the range season some equally fearless individual defied them.

"Throw up your hands and surrender," said the officer to a Texas cowboy, who had spurred an uncontrollable horse until it was rearing and plunging down the street, leveling meanwhile a double-barreled shotgun at the horseman.

"Not to you, you white-livered s— of a b—," was the instant reply, accompanied by a shot.

The officer staggered back mortally wounded but recovered himself, and the next instant the cowboy reeled from his saddle, a load of buckshot through his breast.

After the boys left us for town, the remainder of us, belonging to the third and fourth guard, grazed the cattle forward leisurely during the afternoon. Through cattle herds were in sight both up and down the river on either side, and on crossing the Mulberry the day before, we learned that several herds were holding out as far south as the

stream, while McNulta had reported over forty herds as having already passed northward on the rail. Dodge was the meeting point for buyers from every quarter. Often herds would sell at Dodge whose destination for delivery was beyond the Yellowstone in Montana. Herds frequently changed owners when the buyer never saw the cattle. A yearling was a yearling and a two year old was a two year old, and the seller's word, that they were "as good or better than the string I sold you last year," was sufficient. Cattle were classified as northern, central, and southern animals, and, except in case of severe drouth in the preceding years, were pretty nearly uniform in size throughout each section. The prairie section of the State left its indelible imprint on the cattle bred in the open country, while the coast, as well as the piney woods and black-jack sections, did the same, thus making classification easy.

McCann overtook us early in the evening, and, being an obliging fellow, was induced by Forrest to stand the first guard with Honeyman so as to make up the proper number of watches, though with only two men on guard at a time, for it was hardly possible that any of the others would return before daybreak. There was much to be seen in Dodge, and as losing a night's sleep on duty was considered nothing, in hilarious recreation sleep could be entirely forgotten. McCann had not forgotten us, but had smuggled out a quart bottle

to cut the alkali in our drinking water. But a quart amongst eight of us was not dangerous, the night passed without incident, though we had a growing impatience to get into town. As we expected, about sunrise the next morning our men off on holiday rode into camp, having never closed an eye during the entire night. They brought word from Flood that the herd would only graze over to Saw Log Creek that day, so as to let the remainder of us have a day and night in town. Lovell would only advance half a month's wages — twenty-five dollars — to the man. It was ample for any personal needs, though we had nearly three months' wages due, and no one protested, for the old man was generally right in his decisions. According to their report the boys had had a hog-killing time, old man Don having been out with them all night. It seems that McNulta stood in well with a class of practical jokers which included the officials of the town, and whenever there was anything on the tapis, he always got the work for himself and friends. During breakfast F. Quarternight told this incident of the evening.

"Some professor, a professor in the occult sciences I think he called himself, had written to the mayor to know what kind of a point Dodge would be for a lecture. The lecture was to be free, but he also intimated that he had a card or two on the side up his sleeve, by which he expected to graze onto some of the coin of the realm from the way-

ring man as well as the citizen. The mayor turned the letter over to Bat Masterson, the city marshal, who answered it, and invited the professor to come on, assuring him that he was deeply interested in the occult sciences, personally, and would take pleasure in securing him a hall and a date, besides announcing his coming through the papers.

"Well, he was billed to deliver his lecture last night. Those old long horns, McNulta and Lovelace, got us in with the crowd, and while they did not know exactly what was coming, they assured us that we could n't afford to miss it. Well, at the appointed hour in the evening, the hall was packed, not over half being able to find seats. It is safe to say there were over five hundred men present, as it was announced for 'men only.' Every gambler in town was there, with a fair sprinkling of cowmen and our tribe. At the appointed hour, Masterson, as chairman, rapped for order, and in a neat little speech announced the object of the meeting. Bat mentioned the lack of interest in the West in the higher arts and sciences, bespoke our careful attention to the subject for our consideration for the evening. He said he thought it hardly necessary to urge the importance of order, but if any one had come out of idleness or bent on mischief, as chairman of the meeting and a peace officer of the city, he would mainly brook no interruption. After a few other

appropriate remarks, he introduced the speaker Dr. J. Graves-Brown, the noted scientist.

"The professor was an oily-tongued fellow, led off on the prelude to his lecture, while the audience was as quiet as mice and as grave as o After he had spoken about five minutes and getting warmed up to his subject, he made an assertion which sounded a little fishy, and some back in the audience blurted out, 'That's damned lie.' The speaker halted in his discourse and looked at Masterson, who arose, and, drawing two six-shooters, looked the audience over as if trying to locate the offender. Laying the guns down on the table, he informed the meeting that any other interruption would cost the offender his life if he had to follow him to the Rio Grande or any British possessions. He then asked the professor if there would be no further interruptions, to proceed with his lecture. The professor hesitated about going on, when Masterson assured him that it was evident that his audience, with the exception of one skulking coyote, was deeply interested in the subject, but that no one man could interfere with the freedom of speech in Dodge as long as it was a free country and he was city marshal. After this little talk, the speaker braced up and launched out again on his lecture. When he was once more under good headway, he had occasion to relate an exhibition which he had witnessed while studying his profession in India. The in

ent related was a trifle rank for any one to swallow raw, when the same party who had interrupted before sang out, 'That's another damn lie.'

"Masterson came to his feet like a flash, a gun in each hand, saying, 'Stand up, you measly skunk, so I can see you.' Half a dozen men rose in different parts of the house and cut loose at him, and as they did so the lights went out and the room filled with smoke. Masterson was blazing away with two guns, which so lighted up the rostrum that we could see the professor crouching under the table. Of course they were using blank cartridges, but the audience raised the long yell and poured out through the windows and doors, and the lecture was over. A couple of police came in later, so McNulta said, escorted the professor to his room at the hotel, and quietly advised him that Dodge was hardly capable of appreciating anything so advanced as a lecture on the occult sciences."

Breakfast over, Honeyman ran in the *remuda*, and we caught the best horses in our mounts, on which to pay our respects to Dodge. Forrest detailed Rod Wheat to wrangle the horses, for we intended to take Honeyman with us. As it was only about six miles over to the Saw Log, Quince advised that they graze along Duck Creek until after dinner, and then graze over to the former stream during the afternoon. Before leaving, we rode over and looked out the trail after it left Buck, for it was quite possible that we might re-

turn during the night; and we requested McC to hang out the lantern, elevated on the end of the wagon tongue, as a beacon. After taking bearings, we reined southward over the divide to Dodge.

"The very first thing I do," said Quince Freston, as we rode leisurely along, "after I get a shave and hair-cut and buy what few tricks I need is to hunt up that gambler in the Long Branch and ask him to take a drink with me — I took my parting one on him. Then I'll simply set in and win back every dollar I lost there last year. There's something in this northern air that I can breathe in this morning that tells me that this is my lucky day. You other kids had better let the games alone and save your money to buy red shirts, handkerchiefs and soda water and such harmless jimcracks." The fact that The Rebel was ten years his senior never entered his mind as he gave us this fatherly advice, though to be sure the majority of us were his juniors in years.

On reaching Dodge, we rode up to the Wright House, where Flood met us and directed our cavalcade across the railroad to a livery stable, the proprietor of which was a friend of Lovell's. We unsaddled and turned our horses into a large corral, and while we were in the office of the liveryman surrendering our artillery, Flood came in and handed each of us twenty-five dollars in gold, warning us that when that was gone no more would be

advanced. On receipt of the money, we scattered like partridges before a gunner. Within an hour or two, we began to return to the stable by ones and twos, and were stowing into our saddle pockets our purchases, which ran from needles and thread to .45 cartridges, every mother's son reflecting the art of the barber, while John Officer had his blond mustaches blackened, waxed, and curled like a French dancing master. "If some of you boys will hold him," said Moss Strayhorn, commenting on Officer's appearance, "I'd like to take a good smell of him, just to see if he took oil up there where the end of his neck's haired over." As Officer already had several drinks comfortably stowed away under his belt, and stood up strong six feet two, none of us volunteered.

After packing away our plunder, we sauntered round town, drinking moderately, and visiting the various saloons and gambling houses. I clung to my bunkie, The Rebel, during the rounds, for he had learned to like him, and had confidence he would lead me into no indiscretions. At the Long Branch, we found Quince Forrest and Wyatt Poundtree playing the faro bank, the former keeping cases. They never recognized us, but were answering a great many questions, asked by the dealer and lookout, regarding the possible volume of the cattle drive that year. Down at another gambling house, The Rebel met Ben Thompson, faro dealer not on duty and an old cavalry com-

rade, and the two cronied around for over an hour like long lost brothers, pledging anew their friendship over several social glasses, in which I was always included. There was no telling how long this reunion would have lasted, but happily for my sake, Lovell — who had been asleep all the morning — started out to round us up for dinner with him at the Wright House, which was at that date a famous hostelry, patronized almost exclusively by the Texas cowmen and cattle buyers.

We made the rounds of the gambling houses looking for our crowd. We ran across three of the boys piking at a monte game, who came with us reluctantly; then, guided by Lovell, we started for the Long Branch, where we felt certain we would find Forrest and Roundtree, if they had any money left. Forrest was broke, which made him ready to come, and Roundtree, though quite a winner, out of deference to our employer's wishes cashed in and joined us. Old man Don could hardly do enough for us; and before we could reach the Wright House, had lined us up again at three different bars; and while I had confidence in my navigable capacity, I found they were coming just a little too fast and free, seeing I had scarcely drunk anything in three months but branch water. As we lined up at the Wright House bar for the final before dinner, The Rebel, who was standing next to me, entered a waiver and took a cigar, which I understood to be a hint, and I did likewise.

We had a splendid dinner. Our outfit, with McNulta, occupied a ten-chair table, while on the opposite side of the room was another large table, occupied principally by drovers who were waiting for their herds to arrive. Among those at the latter table, whom I now remember, was "Uncle" Henry Stevens, Jesse Ellison, "Lum" Slaughter, John Blocker, Ike Pryor, "Dun" Houston, and last but not least, Colonel "Shanghai" Pierce. The latter was possibly the most widely known cowman between the Rio Grande and the British possessions. He stood six feet four in his stockings, was stout and raw-boned, and the possessor of a voice which, even in ordinary conversation, could be distinctly heard across the street.

"No, I'll not ship any more cattle to your town," said Pierce to a cattle solicitor during the dinner, his voice in righteous indignation resounding like a foghorn through the dining-room, "unless you adjust your yardage charges. Listen! I can go right up into the heart of your city and get a room for myself, with a nice clean bed in it, plenty of soap, water, and towels, and I can occupy that room for twenty-four hours for two bits. And your stockyards, away out in the suburbs, want to charge me twenty cents a head and let my steer stand out in the weather."

After dinner, all the boys, with the exception of Priest and myself, returned to the gambling houses as though anxious to work overtime. Be-

fore leaving the hotel, Forrest effected the loan ten from Roundtree, and the two returned to Long Branch, while the others as eagerly sought out a monte game. But I was fascinated with the conversation of these old cowmen, and sat around for several hours listening to their yarns and cat talk.

"I was selling a thousand beef steers one time to some Yankee army contractors," Pierce was narrating to a circle of listeners, "and I got the idea that they were not up to snuff in receiving cattle out on the prairie. I was holding a herd of about three thousand, and they had agreed to take a running cut, which showed that they had their receiving agent fixed. Well, my foreman and I were counting the cattle as they came between the corral and the pens. But the steers were wild, long-legged coasters, and they came through between us like scared wolves. I had lost the count several times, but guessed at them and started over, the cattle still coming like a whirlwind; and when I thought about nine hundred had passed us, I cut them off and said out, 'Here they come and there they go; just an even thousand, by gatlings! What do you make of it, Bill?'

"'Just an even thousand, Colonel,' replied my foreman. Of course the contractors were counting at the same time, and I suppose didn't like to admit they could n't count a thousand cattle when anybody else could, and never asked for a recount."

ut accepted and paid for them. They had hired an outfit, and held the cattle outside that night, but the next day, when they cut them into car lots and shipped them, they were a hundred and eighteen short. They wanted to come back on me to make them good, but, shucks! I was n't responsible for their Jim Crow outfit lost the cattle."

Along early in the evening, Flood advised us boys to return to the herd with him, but all the crowd wanted to stay in town and see the sights. Lovell interceded in our behalf, and promised to see that we left town in good time to be in camp before the herd was ready to move the next morning. On this assurance, Flood saddled up and started for the Saw Log, having ample time to make the ride before dark. By this time most of the boys had worn off the wire edge for gambling and were comparing notes. Three of them were broke, but Quince Forrest had turned the tables and was over a clean hundred winner for the day. Those who had no money fortunately had good credit with those of us who had, for there was yet much to be seen, and in Dodge in '82 it took money to see the elephant. There were several variety theatres, a number of dance halls, and other resorts which, like the wicked, flourish best under darkness. After supper, just about dusk, we went over to the stable, caught our horses, saddled them, and tied them up for the night. We fully expected to leave town by ten o'clock, for it

was a good twelve mile ride to the Saw Log. making the rounds of the variety theatres and dance halls, we hung together. Lovell excused himself early in the evening, and at parting assured him that the outfit would leave for camp before midnight. We were enjoying ourselves immensely over at the Lone Star dance hall, when an incident occurred in which we entirely neglected the good advice of McNulta, and had the sensation of hearing lead whistle and cry around our ears before we got away from town.

Quince Forrest was spending his winnings as well as drinking freely, and at the end of a quarrel gave vent to his hilarity in an old-fashioned Comanche yell. The bouncer of the dance hall of course had his eye on our crowd, and at the end of a change, took Quince to task. He was a superb brute, and instead of couching his request in appropriate language, threatened to throw him out of the house. Forrest stood like one absent-minded and took the abuse, for physically he was no match for the bouncer, who was armed, moreover, and wore an officer's star. I was dancing in the same set with a red-headed, freckled-faced girl, who clutched my arm and wished to know if my friend was armed. I assured her that he was not, or she would have had notice of it before the bouncer's invective was ended. At the conclusion of the dance, Quince and The Rebel passed out, giving the rest of us the word to remain as though

ing was wrong. In the course of half an hour, priest returned and asked us to take our leave one a time without attracting any attention, and meet at the stable. I remained until the last, and noticed The Rebel and the bouncer taking drink together at the bar, — the former apparently in a most amiable mood. We passed out together shortly afterward, and found the other boys mounted and awaiting our return, it being now about midnight. It took but a moment to secure our guns, and once in the saddle, we rode through the town in the direction of the herd. On the outskirts of the town, we halted. "I'm going back to that dance hall," said Forrest, "and have one round at least with that woman-herder. No man who walks this old earth can insult me, as he did, not if he has a hundred stars on him. If any of you don't want to go along, ride right on to camp, but I'd like to have you all go. And when I take my measure, it will be the signal to the rest of you to put out the lights. All that's going, come on." There were no dissenters to the programme. I saw at a glance that my bunkie was heart and soul in the play, and took my cue and kept my mouth shut. We circled round the town to a vacant lot within a block of the rear of the dance hall. Coneyman was left to hold the horses; then, taking off our belts and hanging them on the pommels of our saddles, we secreted our six-shooters inside the waistbands of our trousers. The hall was still

crowded with the revelers when we entered, a
at a time, Forrest and Priest being the last
arrive. Forrest had changed hats with The Rebel
who always wore a black one, and as the bound
circulated around, Quince stepped squarely
front of him. There was no waste of words, but
a gun-barrel flashed in the lamplight, and the
bouncer, struck with the six-shooter, fell like
beef. Before the bewildered spectators could raise
a hand, five six-shooters were turned into the ceiling.
The lights went out at the first fire, and
amidst the rush of men and the screaming of women,
men, we reached the outside, and within a minute
were in our saddles. All would have gone wrong
had we returned by the same route and avoided
the town; but after crossing the railroad tracks
anger and pride having not been properly satisfied,
we must ride through the town.

On entering the main street, leading north and
opposite the bridge on the river, somebody of our
party in the rear turned his gun loose into the air.
The Rebel and I were riding in the lead, and
the clattering of hoofs and shooting behind us
our horses started on the run, the shooting by that
time having become general. At the second street
crossing, I noticed a rope of fire belching from a
Winchester in the doorway of a store building.
There was no doubt in my mind but we were the
object of the manipulator of that carbine, and as
we reached the next cross street, a man kneeling



in the shadow of a building opened fire on us with a six-shooter. Priest reined in his horse, and not having wasted cartridges in the open-air shooting, returned the compliment until he emptied his gun. By this time every officer in the town was throwing lead after us, some of which cried a little too close for comfort. When there was no longer any shooting on our flanks, we turned into a cross street and soon left the lead behind us. At the outskirts of the town we slowed up our horses and took it leisurely for a mile or so, when Quince Forrest halted us and said, "I'm going to drop out here and see if any one follows us. I want to be alone, so that if any officers try to follow us up, I can have it out with them."

As there was no time to lose in parleying, and as he had a good horse, we rode away and left him. On reaching camp, we secured a few hours' sleep, but the next morning, to our surprise, Forrest failed to appear. We explained the situation to Flood, who said if he did not show up by noon, he would go back and look for him. We all felt positive that he would not dare to go back to town; and if he was lost, as soon as the sun arose he would be able to get his bearings. While we were nooning about seven miles north of the Saw Log, some one noticed a buggy coming up the trail. As it came nearer we saw that there were two other occupants of the rig besides the driver. When it drew up old Quince, still

myself wearing The Rebel's hat, stepped out of the room, dragged out his saddle from under the seat, and invited his companions to dinner. They both declined, when Forrest, taking out his purse, handed a twenty-dollar gold piece to the driver with a oath. He then asked the other man what he owed him, but the latter very haughtily declined any recompense, and the conveyance drove away.

"I suppose you fellows don't know what all this means," said Quince, as he filled a plate and sat down in the shade of the wagon. "Well, the horse of mine got a bullet plugged into him last night as we were leaving town, and before I could get him to Duck Creek, he died on me. I carried my saddle and blankets until daylight, when I hid in a draw and waited for something to turn up. I thought some of you would come back and look for me sometime, for I knew you would n't understand it, when all of a sudden here comes this livery man along with that drummer — going out to Jetmore. I believe he said. I explained what I wanted, but he decided that his business was more important than mine, and refused me. I referred the matter to Judge Colt, and the judge decided that it was more important that I overtake this herd. I must have made him take pay, too, only he acted so mean about it."

After dinner, fearing arrest, Forrest took his horse and rode on ahead to the Solomon River. We were a glum outfit that afternoon, but after

Good night's rest were again as fresh as daisies. When McCann started to get breakfast, he hung his coat on the end of the wagon rod, while he went for a bucket of water. During his absence, John Officer was noticed slipping something into Barney's coat pocket, and after breakfast when our book went to his coat for his tobacco, he unearthed a lady's cambric handkerchief, nicely embroidered, and a silver mounted garter. He looked at the articles a moment, and, grasping the situation at a glance, ran his eye over the outfit for the culprit. But there was not a word or a smile. He walked over and threw the articles into the fire, remarking, "Good whiskey and bad women will be the ruin of you varmints yet."

CHAPTER XIV

SLAUGHTER'S BRIDGE

HERDS bound for points beyond the Yellowstone in Montana, always considered Dodge as the halfway landmark on the trail, though we had hardly covered half the distance to the destination of Circle Dots. But with Dodge in our rear, all felt that the backbone of the drive was broken, and it was only the middle of June. In order to divide the night work more equitably, for the remainder of the trip the first and fourth guards changed, the second and third remaining as they were. We had begun to feel the scarcity of wood for cooking purposes some time past, and while crossing the plains of western Kansas, we were frequently forced to resort to the old bed grounds of a year or two previous for cattle chips. These chips were a poor substitute, and we swung a cowskin under the reach of the wagon, so that when we encountered wood on creeks and rivers we could lay in a supply. Whenever our wagon was in the rear the riders on either side of the herd were always on the skirmish for fuel, which they left alongside the wagon track, and our cook was sure to stow away underneath on the cowskin.

In spite of any effort on our part, the length of the days made long drives the rule. The cattle could be depended on to leave the bed ground at dawn, and before the outfit could breakfast, secure mounts, and overtake the herd, they would often have grazed forward two or three miles. Often we never threw them on the trail at all, yet when it came time to bed them at night, we had covered twenty miles. They were long, monotonous days; for we were always sixteen to eighteen hours in the saddle, while in emergencies we got the benefit of the limit.) We frequently saw mirages, though we were never led astray by shady groves of timber or tempting lakes of water, but always kept within a mile or two of the trail. The evening of the third day after Forrest left us, he returned as we were bedding down the cattle at dusk, and on being assured that no officers had followed us, remained his place with the herd. He had not even reached the Solomon River, but had stopped with the herd of Millet's on Big Boggy. This creek he reported as bottomless, and the Millet herd as having lost between forty and fifty head of cattle attempting to force it at the regular crossing the day before his arrival. They had scouted the creek both up and down since without finding a safe crossing. It seemed that there had been unusually heavy June rains through that section, which accounted for Boggy being in its dangerous condition. Millet's foreman had not considered it

necessary to test such an insignificant stream until he got a couple of hundred head of cattle flooding in the mire. They had saved the greater portion of the mired cattle, but quite a number were trampled to death by the others, and now the regular crossing was not approachable for the stench of dead cattle. Flood knew the stream, so did a number of our outfit, but none of them had any idea that it could get into such an impassable condition as Forrest reported.

The next morning Flood started to the east and Priest to the west to look out a crossing, for we were then within half a day's drive of the creosote Big Boggy paralleled the Solomon River in front, the two not being more than five miles apart. The confluence was far below in some settlements, and we must keep to the westward of immigration, on account of the growing crops in the fertile valley of the Solomon. On the westward had a favorable crossing been found, we would almost have had to turn our herd backward, for we were already within the half circle which the creek described in our front. So after the two men left us, we allowed the herd to graze forward, keeping several miles to the westward of the timber in order to get the benefit of the best grazing. Our herd, when left to itself, would graze from a mile to a mile and a half an hour, and by the middle of the forenoon the timber on Big Boggy and the Solomon beyond was sighted. On reaching

ing this last divide, some one sighted a herd about five or six miles to the eastward and nearly parallel with us. As they were three or four miles beyond the trail, we could easily see that they were grazing along like ourselves, and Forrest was appealed to know if it was the Millet herd. He said not, and pointed out to the northeast about the location of the Millet cattle, probably five miles in advance of the stranger on our right. When we overtook our wagon at noon, McCann, who had never left the trail, reported having seen the herd. They looked to him like heavy beef cattle, and had two yoke of oxen to their chuck wagon, which served further to proclaim them as strangers.

Neither Priest nor Flood returned during the noon hour, and when the herd refused to lie down and rest longer, we grazed them forward till the fringe of timber which grew along the stream loomed up not a mile distant in our front. From the course we were traveling, we would strike the creek several miles above the regular crossing, and Forrest reported that Millet was holding below the old crossing on a small rivulet, all we could do was to hold our wagon in the rear, and await the turn of our men out on scout for a ford. Priest was the first to return, with word that he had ridden the creek out for twenty-five miles and had found no crossing that would be safe for a mud-rattle. On hearing this, we left two men with the herd, and the rest of the outfit took the wagon,

went on to Boggy, and made camp. It was a deceptive-looking stream, not over fifty or sixty feet wide. In places the current barely moved, shallowing and deepening, from a few inches in places to several feet in others, with an occasional pool that would swim a horse. We probed it with poles until we were satisfied that we were up against a proposition different from anything we had yet encountered. While we were discussing the situation, a stranger rode up on a fine roan horse, and inquired for our foreman. Forrest informed him that our boss was away looking for a crossing, but we were expecting his return at any time; and invited the stranger to dismount. He did so, and threw himself down in the shade of our wagon. He was a small, boyish-looking fellow, of sandy complexion, not much, if any, over twenty years old, and smiled continuously.

"My name is Pete Slaughter," said he, by way of introduction, "and I've got a herd of twenty-eight hundred beef steers, beyond the trail and a few miles back. I've been riding since daybreak down the creek, and I'm prepared to state that the chance of crossing is as good right here as anywhere. I wanted to see your foreman, and if he'll help, we'll bridge her. I've been down to see this other outfit, but they ridicule the idea, though I think they'll come around all right. I borrowed their axe, and to-morrow morning you'll see me with my outfit cutting timber to bridge Big Boggy."

That's right, boys; it's the only thing to do. The trouble is I've only got eight men all told. I don't aim to travel over eight or ten miles a day, so I don't need a big outfit. You say your foreman's name is Flood? Well, if he don't return before I go, some of you tell him that he's wasting good time looking for a ford, for there ain't none."

In the conversation which followed, we learned that Slaughter was driving for his brother Lum, a widely known cowman and drover, whom we had seen in Dodge. He had started with the grass from north Texas, and by the time he reached the Platte, many of his herd would be fit to ship to market, and what were not would be in good demand as feeders in the corn belt of eastern Nebraska. He asked if we had seen his herd during the morning, and on hearing we had, got up and asked McCann to let him see our axe. This he gave a critical examination, before he mounted his horse to go, and on leaving said, —

"If your foreman don't want to help build a bridge, I want to borrow that axe of yours. But you fellows talk to him. If any of you boys has ever been over on the Chisholm trail, you will remember the bridge on Rush Creek, south of the Washita River. I built that bridge in a day with an outfit of ten men. Why, shucks! if these outfits would pull together, we could cross to-morrow evening. Lots of these old foremen don't like to

listen to a cub like me, but, holy snakes! I've been over the trail oftener than any of them. Why, when I was n't big enough to make a hand with the herd, — only ten years old, — in the days when we drove to Abilene, they used to send me in the lead with an old cylinder gun to shoot at the buffalo and scare them off the trail. And I've made the trip every year since. So you tell Flood when he comes in, that Pete Slaughter was here and that he's going to build a bridge, and would like to have him and his outfit help."

Had it not been for his youth and perpetual smile, we might have taken young Slaughter more seriously, for both Quince Forrest and The Rebel remembered the bridge on Rush Creek over the Chisholm. Still there was an air of confidence and assurance in the young fellow; and the fact that he was the trusted foreman of Lum Slaughter, in charge of a valuable herd of cattle, carried weight with those who knew that drover. The most unwelcome thought in the project was that it required the swinging of an axe to fell trees and to cut them into the necessary lengths, and, as I have said before, the Texan never took kindly to manual labor. But Priest looked favorably on the suggestion, and so enlisted my support, and even pointed out a spot where timber was most abundant as a suitable place to build the bridge.

"Hell's fire," said Joe Stallings, with infinite contempt, "there's thousands of places to build

bridge, and the timber's there, but the idea is to cut it." And his sentiments found a hearty approval in the majority of the outfit.

Flood returned late that evening, having ridden as far down the creek as the first settlement. The Rebel, somewhat antagonized by the attitude of the majority, reported the visit and message left for him by young Slaughter. Our foreman knew him by general reputation amongst trail bosses, and when Priest vouched for him as the builder of the Rush Creek bridge on the Chisholm trail, Flood said, "Why, I crossed my herd four years ago on that Rush Creek bridge within a week after it was built, and wondered who it could be that had the nerve to undertake that task. Rush is n't over half as wide a bayou as Boggy, but she's a true little sister to this miry slough. So he's going to build a bridge anyhow, is he?"

The next morning young Slaughter was at our camp before sunrise, and never once mentioning his business or waiting for the formality of an invitation, proceeded to pour out a tin cup of coffee and otherwise provide himself with a substantial breakfast. There was something amusing in the audacity of the fellow which all of us liked, though he was fifteen years the junior of our foreman. McCann pointed out Flood to him, and taking his well-loaded plate, he went over and sat down by our foreman, and while he ate talked rapidly, to enlist our outfit in the building of the bridge.

During breakfast, the outfit listened to the two bosses as they discussed the feasibility of the project, — Slaughter enthusiastic, Flood reserved and asking all sorts of questions as to the mode of procedure. Young Pete met every question with promptness, and assured our foreman that the building of bridges was his long suit. After breakfast, the two foremen rode off down the creek together, and within half an hour Slaughter's wagon and *remuda* pulled up within sight of the regular crossing, and shortly afterwards our foreman returned, and ordered our wagon to pull down to a clump of cottonwoods which grew about half a mile below our camp. Two men were detailed to look after our herd during the day, and the remainder of us returned with our foreman to the site selected for the bridge. On our arrival three axes were swinging against as many cottonwoods and there was no doubt in any one's mind that we were going to be under a new foreman for the day at least. Slaughter had a big negro cook who swung an axe in a manner which bespoke him a job for the day, and McCann was instructed to provide dinner for the extra outfit.

The site chosen for the bridge was a miry bottom over which oozed three or four inches of water where the width of the stream was about sixty feet with solid banks on either side. To get a good foundation was the most important matter, but the brush from the trees would supply the material for

that; and within an hour, brush began to arrive, dragged from the pommels of saddles, and was piled into the stream. About this time a call went out for a volunteer who could drive oxen, for the darky was too good an axeman to be recalled. As I had driven oxen as a boy, I was going to offer my services, when Joe Stallings eagerly volunteered in order to avoid using an axe. Slaughter had some extra chain, and our four mules were pressed into service as an extra team in snaking logs. As McCann was to provide for the inner man, the mule team fell to me; and putting my saddle on the nigh wheeler, I rode jauntily past Mr. Stallings as he trudged alongside his two yoke of oxen.

About ten o'clock in the morning, George Jacklin, the foreman of the Millet herd, rode up with several of his men, and seeing the bridge taking shape, turned in and assisted in dragging brush for the foundation. By the time all hands knocked off for dinner, we had a foundation of brush twenty feet wide and four feet high, to say nothing about what had sunk in the mire. The logs were cut about fourteen feet long, and old Joe and I had snaked them up as fast as the axemen could get them ready. Jacklin returned to his wagon for dinner and a change of horses, though Slaughter, with plenty of assurance, had invited him to eat with us, and when he declined had remarked, with no less confidence, "Well, then, you'll be back right after dinner. And say, bring all the men

you can spare; and if you 've got any gunny sacs or old tarpaulins, bring them; and by all means don't forget your spade."

Pete Slaughter was a harsh master, considering he was working volunteer labor; but then we all felt a common interest in the bridge, for if Slaughter's beeves could cross, ours could, and so could Millet's. All the men dragging brush changed horses during dinner, for there was to be no pause in piling in a good foundation as long as the material was at hand. Jacklin and his outfit returned ten strong, and with thirty men at work, the bridge grew. They began laying the logs on the brush after dinner, and the work of sodding the bridge went forward at the same time. The bridge stood about two feet above the water in the creek, but when near the middle of the stream was reached, the foundation gave way, and for an hour ten horses were kept busy dragging brush to fill that sink hole until it would bear the weight of the logs. We had used all the acceptable timber on our side of the stream for half a mile either way, and yet there were not enough logs to complete the bridge. When we lacked only some ten or twelve logs Slaughter had the boys sod a narrow strip across the remaining brush, and the horsemen led their mounts across to the farther side. Then the axmen crossed, felled the nearest trees, and the last logs were dragged up from the pommels of our saddles.

It now only remained to sod over and dirt the bridge thoroughly. With only three spades the work was slow, but we cut sod with axes, and after several hours' work had it finished. The two yoke of oxen were driven across and back for a test, and the bridge stood it nobly. Slaughter then brought up his *remuda*, and while the work of dirting the bridge was still going on, crossed and recrossed his band of saddle horses twenty times. When the bridge looked completed to every one else, young Pete advised laying stringers across on either side; so a number of small trees were felled and guard rails strung across the ends of the logs and staked. Then more dirt was carried in on tarpaulins and in gunny sacks, and every chink and crevice filled with sod and dirt. It was now getting rather late in the afternoon, but during the finishing touches, young Slaughter had dispatched his outfit to bring up his herd; and at the same time Flood had sent a number of our outfit to bring up our cattle. Now Slaughter and the rest of us took the oxen, which we had unyoked, and went out about a quarter of a mile to meet his herd coming up. Turning the oxen in the lead, young Pete took one point and Flood the other, and pointed in the lead cattle for the bridge. On reaching it the cattle hesitated for a moment, and looked as though they were going to balk, but finally one of the oxen took the lead, and they began to cross in almost Indian file. They were big

four and five year old beeves, and too many them on the bridge at one time might have sur it, but Slaughter rode back down the line of cat and called to the men to hold them back.

"Don't crowd the cattle," he shouted. "Gi them all the time they want. We're in no hur now; there's lots of time."

They were a full half hour in crossing, the cha of cattle taking the bridge never for a mom being broken. Once all were over, his men ro to the lead and turned the herd up Boggy, in or to have it well out of the way of ours, which w then looming up in sight. Slaughter asked Flo if he wanted the oxen; and as our cattle had ne seen a bridge in their lives, the foreman deci to use them; so we brought them back and met herd, now strung out nearly a mile. Our ca were naturally wild, but we turned the oxen in lead, and the two bosses again taking the poi moved the herd up to the bridge. The oxen w again slow to lead out in crossing, and sev hundred head of cattle had congested in front the new bridge, making us all rather nerve when a big white ox led off, his mate follow and the herd began timidly to follow. Our ca required careful handling, and not a word spoken as we nursed them forward, or rode thro them to scatter large bunches. A number of ti we cut the train of cattle off entirely, as they v congesting at the bridge entrance, and, in cross

shied and crowded so that several were forced off the bridge into the mire. Our herd crossed in considerably less time than did Slaughter's beeves, but we had five head to pull out; this, however, was considered nothing, as they were light, and the mire was as thin as soup. Our wagon and saddle horses crossed while we were pulling out the bogged cattle, and about half the outfit, taking the herd, drifted them forward towards the Solomon. Since Millet intended crossing that evening, herds were likely to be too thick for safety at night. The sun was hardly an hour high when the last herd came up to cross. The oxen were put in the lead, as with ours, and all four of the oxen took the bridge, but when the cattle reached the bridge, they made a decided balk and refused to follow the oxen. Not a hoof of the herd would even set foot on the bridge. The oxen were brought back several times, but in spite of all coaxing and nursing, and our best endeavors and devices, they would not risk it. We worked with them until dusk, when all three of the foremen decided it was useless to try longer, but both Slaughter and Flood promised to bring back part of their outfits in the morning and make another effort.

McCann's camp-fire piloted us to our wagon, at least three miles from the bridge, for he had laid in a good supply of wood during the day; and on our arrival our night horses were tied up, and everything made ready for the night. The next

morning we started the herd, but Flood took of us with him and went back to Big Boggy. Millet herd was nearly two miles back from bridge, where we found Slaughter at Jacklin wagon; and several more of his men were, learned, coming over with the oxen at about o'clock. That hour was considered soon enough by the bosses, as the heat of the day would be on the herd by that time, which would make them lazier. When the oxen arrived at the bridge, we rode twenty strong and lined the cattle up for another trial. They had grazed until they were full and sleepy, but the memory of some of them was as vivid of the hours they had spent in the slimy mud of Big Boggy once on a time, and they began moving on sight of the stream. We took them back and brought them up a second time with the same results. We then brought them around in a circle a mile in diameter, and as the rear end of the herd was passing, we turned the last hundred, throwing the oxen into their lead, started them over the bridge; but they too sulked and would have none of it. It was now high noon, so we turned the herd and allowed them to graze back while we went to dinner. Millet's foreman was rather discouraged with the outlook, but Slaughter said that must be crossed if he had to lay over a week for help. After dinner, Jacklin asked us if we wanted a change of horses, and as we could see a two-mile ride ahead of us in overtaking our herd, Flood accepted.

When all was ready to start, Slaughter made a suggestion. "Let's go out," he said, "and bring them up slowly in a solid body, and when we get them opposite the bridge, round them in gradually if we were going to bed them down. I'll take a long lariat to my white wheeler, and when they've quieted down perfectly, I'll lead old Blanco through them and across the bridge, and possibly they'll follow. There's no use crowding them, that only excites them, and if you ever start them milling, the jig's up. They're nice, gentle little, but they've been balked once and they've n't forgotten it."

What we needed right then was a leader, for we were all ready to catch at a straw, and Slaughter's suggestion was welcome, for he had established himself in our good graces until we preferred him to either of the other foremen as a leader. Riding out to the herd, which were lying down, we roused and started them back towards the hoggy. While drifting them back, we covered the front a quarter of a mile in width, and as we reached the bridge we gave them perfect freedom. Slaughter had caught out his white ox, and we gradually worked them into a body, covering perhaps ten acres, in front of the bridge. Several small bunches attempted to mill, but some of us rode in and split them up, and after about half an hour's wait, they quieted down. Then Slaughter rode in whistling and leading his white ox at the

end of a thirty-five foot lariat, and as he rode through them they were so logy that he had to quirt them out of the way. When he came to the bridge, he stopped the white wheeler until everything had quieted down; then he led old Blarney on again, but giving him all the time he needed and stopping every few feet. We held our breath as one or two of the herd started to follow him, but they shied and turned back, and our hopes at the moment were crushed. Slaughter detained the ox on the bridge for several minutes, but seeing it was useless, he dismounted and drove him back into the herd. Again and again he tried the same ruse, but it was of no avail. Then we threw the herd back about half a mile, and on Flood's suggestion cut off possibly two hundred head, a bunch which with our numbers we ought to handle readily in spite of their will, and by putting their *remuda* of over a hundred saddle horses in the immediate lead, made the experiment of forcing them. We took the saddle horses down and crossed and recrossed the bridge several times with them, and the cattle came up turned the horses into the lead and headed for the bridge. With a cordon of twenty riders around them, no animal could turn back, and the horses crossed the bridge on a trot, but the cattle turned tail and positively refused to have anything to do with it. We held them like a block in a vise, so compactly that they could not even mill, but they would not cross the bridge.

When it became evident that it was a fruitless effort, Jacklin, usually a very quiet man, gave vent to a fit of profanity which would have put the many in Flanders to shame. Slaughter, somewhat to our amusement, reproved him: "Don't fret, man; this is nothing, — I balked a herd once in crossing a railroad track, and after trying for two days to cross them, had to drive ten miles and put them under a culvert. You want to cultivate patience, young fellow, when you're handling dumb brutes."

If Slaughter's darky cook had been thereabouts then, and suggested a means of getting that herd over the bridge, his suggestion would have been welcomed, for the bosses were at their wits' ends. Jacklin swore that he would bed that herd at the entrance, and hold them there until they starved to death or crossed, before he would let an animal go back. But cooler heads were present, and the Rebel mentioned a certain adage, to the effect that when a bird or a girl, he did n't know which, would sing and would n't, she or it ought to be made to sing. He suggested that we hold the four men on the bridge, cut off fifteen head of cattle, and give them such a running start, they would n't know which end their heads were on when they reached the bridge. Millet's foreman approved of the idea, for he was nursing his wrath. The four men were accordingly cut out, and Slaughter and one of his men, taking them, started for the bridge

with instructions to hold them on the middle. The rest of us took about a dozen head of light cattle and brought them within a hundred yards of the bridge, then with a yell started them on a run from which they could not turn back. They struck the bridge squarely, and we had our first cattle on the bridge. Two men held the entrance, and we brought up another bunch in the same manner, which filled the bridge. Now, we thought, if the herd could be brought up slowly, and this bunch let off in their lead, they might follow. June a herd of cattle across in this manner would have been shameful, and the foreman of the herd knew it as well as any one present; but no one protested, so we left men to hold the entrance securely and went back after the herd. When we got them within a quarter of a mile of the creek we cut off about two hundred head of the leaders and brought them around to the rear, for among these leaders were certain to be the ones which had been bogged, and we wanted to have new leaders in this trial. Slaughter was on the farther end of the bridge, and could be depended on to let the oxen lead off at the opportune moment. We brought them up cautiously, and when the herd came within a few rods of the creek the cattle on the bridge lowed to their mates in the herd, and Slaughter, considering the time favorable, opened out and allowed them to leave the bridge on the farther side. As soon as the cattle started leav-

On the farther side, we dropped back, and the leaders of the herd to the number of a dozen, after smelling the fresh dirt and seeing the others crossing, walked cautiously up on the bridge. It was a moment of extreme anxiety. None of us spoke a word, but the cattle crowding off the bridge at the farther end set it vibrating. That was enough: they turned as if panic-stricken and rushed back to the body of the herd. I was almost afraid to look at Jacklin. He could scarcely speak, but he rode over to me, ashen with rage, and kept repeating, "Well, would n't that beat hell!"


Slaughter rode back across the bridge, and the men came up and gathered around Jacklin. We seemed to have run the full length of our rope. No one even had a suggestion to offer, and if any one had had, it needed to be a plausible one to find approval, for hope seemed to have vanished. While discussing the situation, a one-eyed, pox-marked fellow belonging to Slaughter's outfit galloped up from the rear, and said almost breathlessly, "Say, fellows, I see a cow and calf in the road. Let's rope the calf, and the cow is sure to follow. Get the rope around the calf's neck, and when it chokes him, he's liable to bellow, and that'll call the steers. And if you never let up on choking till you get on the other side of the bridge, I think it'll work. Let's try it, anyhow." We all approved, for we knew that next to the smell of blood, nothing will stir range cattle like

the bellowing of a calf. At the mere suggestion Jacklin's men scattered into the herd, and within a few minutes we had a rope round the neck of a calf. As the roper came through the herd leading the calf, the frantic mother followed, with a trail of excited steers at her heels. And as the calf was dragged bellowing across the bridge, it was followed by excited, struggling steers who never knew whether they were walking on a bridge or on *terra firma*. The excitement spread through the herd, and they thickened around the entrance until it was necessary to hold them back, and only a few enough pass to keep the chain unbroken.

They were nearly a half hour in crossing, for the herd was fully as large a herd as ours; and when the last animal had crossed, Pete Slaughter stood in his stirrups and led the long yell. The herd went down that day on nobody's wrath, for Jacklin was so tickled that he offered to kill the fattest beef in his herd if we would stay overnight with him. All three of the herds were now over, and had not this herd balked on us the evening before, over nine thousand cattle would have crossed Slaughter's bridge the day it was built.

It was now late in the evening, and as we had to wait some little time to get our own horses, we stayed for supper. It was dark before we set out to overtake the herd, but the trail was plain, and letting our horses take their own time, we jolted along until after midnight. We might have mis-

the camp, but, by the merest chance, Priest sighted our camp-fire a mile off the trail, though it had turned to embers. On reaching camp, we changed saddles to our night horses, and, calling Officer, were ready for our watch. We were expecting the men on guard to call us any minute, and while Priest was explaining to Officer the trouble we had had in crossing the Millet herd, I dozed off to sleep there as I sat by the rekindled embers. In that minute's sleep my mind wandered in a dream to my home on the San Antonio River, but the next moment I was aroused to the demands of the hour by The Rebel shaking me and saying, —
“Wake up, Tom, and take a new hold. They're calling us on guard. If you expect to follow the trail, son, you must learn to do your sleeping in the winter.”



CHAPTER XV

THE BEAVER

AFTER leaving the country tributary to the Solomon River, we crossed a wide tableland for nearly a hundred miles, and with the exception of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, without a landmark worthy of a name. Western Kansas was then classified, worthily too, as belonging to the Great American Desert, and most of the country for the last five hundred miles of our course was entitled to similar description. Once the freshness of spring had passed, the plain took on her natural sunburned color, and day after day, as far as the eye could reach, the monotony was unbroken, save by the variations of the mirages on every hand. Except at morning and evening, we were never out of sight of these optical illusions, sometimes miles away, and then again close up, when an antelope standing half a mile distant looked as tall as a giraffe. Frequently the lead of the herd would be in eclipse from these illusions, when to the man in the rear the horsemen and cattle in the lead would appear like giants in an old fairy story. As the monotony of the sea can be charged with dangerous men's sensibilities until they become pirates,

urely this desolate, arid plain might be equally charged with the wrongdoing of not a few of our raft.

On crossing the railroad at Grinnell, our foreman received a letter from Lovell, directing him to go to Culbertson, Nebraska, and there meet a man who was buying horses for a Montana ranch. Our employer had his business eye open for a possible purchaser for our *remuda*, and if the horses could be sold for delivery after the herd had reached its destination, the opportunity was not to be overlooked. Accordingly, on reaching Beaver Creek, here we encamped, Flood left us to ride through the Republican River during the night. The trail crossed this river about twenty miles west of Culbertson, and if the Montana horse buyer were met there, it would be no trouble to come up to the trail crossing and look at our horses.

So after supper, and while we were catching up our night horses, Flood said to us, "Now, boys, I'm going to leave the outfit and herd under Joe Stallings as *segundo*. It's hardly necessary to have you under any one as foreman, for you all know your places. But some one must be made responsible, and one bad boss will do less harm than half a dozen that might n't agree. So you can put Honeyman on guard in your place at night, or, if you don't want to stand your own watch, you may behave yourselves, and when I meet you on the Republican, I'll bring out a box of cigars and

have it charged up as axle grease when we get supplies at Ogalalla. And don't sit up all night telling fool stories."

"Now, that's what I call a good cow boss," said Joe Stallings, as our foreman rode away in the twilight; "besides, he used passable good judgment in selecting a *segundo*. Now, Honeyman, you heard what he said. Billy dear, I won't rob you of this chance to stand a guard. McCann, have you got on your next list of supplies any jam and jelly for Sundays? You have? That's right, son—that saves you from standing a guard to-night. Officer, when you come off guard at 3.30 in the morning, build the cook up a good fire. Let me see; yes, and I'll detail young Tom Quinn and The Rebel to grease the wagon and harness your mules before starting in the morning. I want to impress it on your mind, McCann, that you can appreciate a thoughtful cook. What's that, Honeyman? No, indeed, you can't ride my night horse. Love me, love my dog; my horse shares this snap. Now, I don't want to be under the necessity of speaking to any of you first guard, but flop into your saddles ready to take the herd. My turnip says it's eight o'clock now."

"Why, you've missed your calling—you should make a fine second mate on a river steamboat driving niggers," called back Quince Forrest, as the first guard rode away.

When our guard returned, Officer intentional

walked across Stallings's bed, and catching his spur in the tarpaulin, fell heavily across our *segundo*.

"Excuse me," said John, rising, "but I was just nosing around looking for the foreman. Oh, it's you, is it? I just wanted to ask if 4.30 would n't be plenty early to build up the fire. Wood's a little scarce, but I'll burn the prairies if you say so. That's all I wanted to know; you may lay down now and go to sleep."

Our camp-fire that night was a good one, and in the absence of Flood, no one felt like going to bed until drowsiness compelled us. So we lounged around the fire smoking the hours away, and in spite of the admonition of our foreman, told stories far into the night. During the early portion of the evening, dog stories occupied the boards. As the evening wore on, the subject of revisiting the Old States came up for discussion.

"You all talk about going back to the old States," said Joe Stallings, "but I don't take very friendly to the idea. I felt that way once and went home to Tennessee; but I want to tell you that after you live a few years in the sunny Southwest and get onto her ways, you can't stand it back there like you think you can. Now, when I went back, and I reckon my relations will average up pretty well, — fought in the Confederate army, voted the Democratic ticket, and belong to the Methodist church, — they all seemed to be rapidly getting locoed. Why, my uncles, when they think

of planting the old buck field or the widow's acre into any crop, they first go projecting around it, the soil, and, as they say, analyze it, to see what kind of a fertilizer it will require to produce the best results. Back there if one man raises ten acres of corn and his neighbor raises twelve, the one raising twelve is sure to look upon the other as though he lacked enterprise or had modest ambitions. Now, up around that old cow town, Abilene, Kansas, it's a common sight to see the corn fields stretch out like an ocean.

"And then their stock—they are all locoed about that. Why, I know people who will pay a hundred dollars for siring a colt, and if there's one drop of mongrel blood in that sire's veins for ten generations back on either side of his ancestral tree, it condemns him, though he may be a good horse otherwise. They are strong on standard bred horses; but as for me, my mount is all right. I would n't trade with any man in this outfit, without it would be Flood, and there's none of them standard bred either. Why, shucks! if you had the pick of all the standard bred horses in Tennessee, you could n't handle a herd of cattle like our boys with them, without carrying a commissary with you to feed them. No; they would never fit here—it takes a range-raised horse to run cattle; one that can rustle and live on grass.

"Another thing about those people back in those old States: Not one in ten, I'll gamble, knows the



